

# THE ARGOSY.

APRIL, 1876.

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EDINA.

BY MRS. HENRY WOOD, AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

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## CHAPTER X.

### SCHEMING.

THE light of the hot and garish day had nearly faded from the world, leaving on it the cool air, the grateful hues of twilight. Inexpressibly grateful was that twilight to Frank Raynor and the pretty girl by his side, as they paced unrestrainedly, arm in arm, the paths of that wilderness, the garden at the Mount. The period of half-breathed vows and murmured tender hints had passed: each knew the other's love, and they spoke out together confidentially of the future.

After the unpleasant truth—that Frank was not the heir to Eagles Nest—had so unexpectedly dawned on Mrs. St. Clare, she informed her daughter Margaret that the absurd intimacy with Mr. Raynor must be put aside. Margaret, feeling stunned for a minute or two, plucked up the courage to ask why. Because, answered Mrs. St. Clare, it had turned out that he was not the heir to Eagles' Nest. And Margaret, whose courage increased with exercise, gently said that that was no good reason: that she liked Mr. Raynor for himself, not for any prospects he might or might not possess, and that she *could not* give him up. A stormy interview ensued. At least, on the mother's part it was stormy: Margaret was only quiet, and inwardly firm. And the upshot was, that Mrs. St. Clare, who hated contention, as most indolent women do, finally got into a passion, and told Margaret that if she chose to marry Mr. Raynor she must; but that she, her mother, and the Mount, and the St. Clare family generally, would wash their hands of her for ever afterwards.

When once Mrs. St. Clare said a thing, she held to it. Margaret

knew that ; and she knew that from henceforth there was no probability, one might almost write possibility, of inducing her mother to consent to her marrying Frank Raynor. Margaret was mistress of her own actions in one sense of the word : when Colonel St. Clare died he left no restrictions on his daughters. All his money ; it was not much ; was bequeathed to his wife and was at her own absolute disposal ; but not a word was said in his will touching the free actions of his daughters. Mrs. St. Clare knew this ; Daisy knew it ; and that, in the argument, gave the one an advantage over the other.

But Mrs. St. Clare, in the dispute, committed a fatal error. When people fall into a passion, they often say injudicious things. Had she said to Margaret, I forbid you to marry Mr. Raynor, Margaret would never have thought of disobeying the injunction : but when Mrs. St. Clare said, If you choose to marry him, do so, but I shall wash my hands of you, it put the idea into Margaret's head. Mrs. St. Clare had used the words because they came uppermost in her anger, attaching no real meaning to them, never supposing that advantage could be taken of them. To her daughter they wore a different aspect. Right or wrong—though of course it was wrong, not right—she looked upon it as a half-tacit permission : and from that moment the contemplation of marrying Frank with nobody's consent but her own, took possession of her. To lose him seemed terrible in Margaret's eyes ; she would almost as soon have lost life : and instinct whispered to her a warning that in a short while Mrs. St. Clare would contrive to separate them, and they might never meet more.

It was of this terrible prospect—separation—or, rather, of avoiding the prospect, that Mr. Raynor and Margaret were conversing in the twilight of the summer's evening. For once they had met and could linger together without restraint. Mrs. St. Clare and Lydia had gone to a dinner party ten miles away : Margaret had not been invited ; the card said Mrs. and Miss St. Clare ; and so they could not take her. Mrs. St. Clare, divining perhaps that her absence might be thus made use of, had proposed to Lydia to allow Margaret to be the one to go ; but Lydia, selfish as usual, preferred to go herself. Mr. Raynor was no longer a visitor at the Mount. Mrs. St. Clare, after the rupture with Margaret, wrote a request to Dr. Raynor, that for the future *he* would attend himself ; but she gave no reason. So that the lovers had not had many meetings lately.

All the more enjoyable was the one of this evening. Frank had gone over on speculation. Happening to hear Dr. Raynor say that Miss St. Clare was going out to dinner with her mother, he walked over on the chance of seeing Margaret. And there they were, clinging to each other amid the sighing trees and the scent of the night flowers.

Frank, open-natured, single-minded, had told her every particular of his visit to Spring Lawn—what he had gone for, what the result had

been, and what his uncle the Major had assured him of, the large sum he might confidently reckon upon under Mrs. Atkinson's will. To this hour Frank knew not the full truth of Mrs. St. Clare's changed manners; for Margaret, in her delicacy, did not give him a hint as to Eagles' Nest. "Mamma thinks that you—that you are not rich enough to marry," said poor Margaret, stammering somewhat in the brief explanation. But, as he was now pointing out to Margaret with all his eloquence, the time could not be very far off when he should be rich enough.

"Shall you not consider it so, Daisy? When I shall join some noted man in London, to be paid well for my services temporarily, and with the certainty of being his partner at no distant date? We should have a nice house; I would take care of that; and every comfort in it. Not a carriage; not luxuries; I could not attempt that at first; but we could afford, in our happiness, to wait for them."

"Oh yes," murmured Daisy, thinking to herself that it would be Paradise.

"If I fully explain all this to your mother——"

"It would be of no use: she would not listen," interrupted Daisy. "I—I hardly like to tell you what she said, Frank. One thing we may rest assured of—that she will never, never give her consent."

"But she must give it, Daisy. Does she suppose we could give each other up? You and I are not children, to be played with—divided without rhyme or reason."

"In a short while—I do not know how short—mamma intends to shut up the Mount and take me and Lydia to Switzerland and Italy. It may be *years* before we come back, Frank; years, and years, and years. I daresay I should never see you again."

"I'm sure you speak calmly enough about it, Daisy! As if you liked it!"

Calmly enough! Liked it! Looking down at her he met her reproachful eyes and the sudden tears the words called up in them.

"My darling, what is to be done? You cannot go abroad with them: you must stay in England."

"As if that would be possible!" breathed Daisy. "I have no one to stay with; no relatives, or anything. And if I had, mamma would not leave me."

"I wish I could marry you off hand!" cried thoughtless Frank, speaking more in the impulse of the moment than attaching any real meaning to what he said.

Daisy sighed: and put her cheek against his arm. And what with one word and another, they both began to think it might be. Love is blind, and love's arguments, though sweetly specious, are sadly delusive. In a few minutes they had got to think that an immediate marriage, as private as might be, was the only way to save them from perdition.

That is, to preserve them one for another : and that it would be the very best mode of proceeding under their untoward lot.

"The sooner it is done, the better, Daisy," cried Frank, going in for it now with all his characteristic eagerness. "I'd say to-morrow, if I had the license, but I must get that first. I hope and trust your mother will not be very angry!"

Daisy had not lifted her face. It pressed his arm all the closer. Frank filled up an interlude by taking a kiss from it.

"Mamma said that if I did marry you, she should wash her hands of me," whispered Daisy.

"Said that! Did she! Why, then, Daisy, she must have seen for herself that it was our best and only resource. I look upon it almost in the light of a permission."

"Do you think so?"

"Of course I do. And so do you, don't you? How good of her to say it!"

With the blushes, that the subject called up, lighting her face, they renewed their promenade amid the trees, under the grey light of the evening sky, talking earnestly. The matter itself settled, ways and means had to be discussed. Frank's arm was round her; her hand was again lying in his.

"Our own church at Trennack will be the safest, Daisy; the safest, and best; and the one most readily got to. You can come down to it at an early hour: eight o'clock, say. They will not be astir here at home, and I'll be bound you will meet nobody en route. The road is lonely enough, you know, whether you take the highway or the Bare Plain."

Daisy did not answer. Her clear eyes had a far-off look in them, gazing at the grey sky.

"Fortune itself seems to aid us," went on Frank, briskly. "At almost any time but this we might not have been able to accomplish it so deftly. Had I gone to Mr. Pine and said, I want you to marry me and say nothing about it, he might have demurred; thought it necessary to consult Dr. Raynor first, or invented some such scruple; but with Pine away and this new man here the matter is easy. And so Daisy, my best love, if you will be early at the church the day after to-morrow, I shall be there waiting for you."

"What do you call early?" asked Daisy.

"Eight o'clock, I said. It had better not be later. We'll get married, and not a soul will be any the wiser."

"Of course I don't mean it to be a real wedding," said Daisy, blushing violently, "with a tour, and a breakfast, and all that, Frank. We can just go into the church, and go through the ceremony, and come out again at different doors; and I shall walk home here, and you will go back to Dr. Raynor's. Don't you see?"

"All right," said Frank.

"And if it were not," added Daisy, bursting into a sudden flood of tears, "that it seems to be the only way to ensure our non-separation, and that mamma must have had some idea we should take it when she said she should wash her hands of me, I'd not do such a dreadful thing for the world."

Frank Raynor set himself to soothe her, kissing the tears away. A few more minutes given to the details of the plan, an urgent charge to Daisy to keep her courage up, and to be at the church in time, and then they separated.

Daisy stood at the gate and watched him down the slight incline from the Mount, until he disappeared. She remained where she was, dwelling upon the momentous step she had decided to take; now shrinking from it instinctively, now telling herself that it was her only chance of happiness in this world, and now blushing and trembling at the thought of being his wife, though only in name, ere the setting of the day-after-to-morrow's sun. When she at length turned with a slow step indoors, the lady's-maid, Tabitha, was in the drawing-room.

"Is it not rather late for you to be out, Miss Margaret? The damp is rising. I've been in here twice before to see if you'd not like a cup of tea."

"It is as dry as it can be—a warm, lovely evening," returned Margaret. "Tea? Oh, I don't mind whether I take any or not. Bring it if you like, Tabitha."

With this semi-permission, the woman withdrew to bring the tea. Margaret looked after her and knitted her brow.

"She has been watching me and Frank—I *think*. I am sure old Tabitha's sly—and fond of interfering in other people's business. I hope she will not go and tell mamma he was here—or Lydia."

This woman, Tabitha Float, had only lived with them since they were at the Mount: their former maid, at the last moment, having declined to quit Bath. Mrs. St. Clare had made inquiries for one when she reached the Mount, and Tabitha Float presented herself. She had recently left a family in the neighbourhood and was staying at Trennach with her relatives, making her home at the druggist's. Mrs. St. Clare engaged her, and there she was. She proved to be a very respectable and superior servant, but somewhat fond of gossip: and in that latter propensity was encouraged by Lydia. Amid the ennui pervading the days of Miss St. Clare, and which she unceasingly complained of, even the tattle of an elderly serving-maid seemed an agreeable interlude.

Not a word said Frank Raynor of the project in hand. Serious, nay solemn, though the step he contemplated was, he was entering upon it in the lightest and most careless manner (speaking relatively), with no more thought than he might have given to the contemplation of a journey.

He had remarked to Margaret—who, in point of prudence, was not, in this case, one whit better than himself—that fortune itself seemed to be aiding them. In so far as that circumstances were just now, through the absence of the Rector of Trennach, more favourable to the safe and easy accomplishment of the ceremony than they could have been at another time, that was true. The Reverend Mr. Pine had at length found himself obliged to follow the advice of Dr. Raynor, and was gone away with his wife for three months' rest. A young clergyman, named Backup, was taking the duty for the time; he had but just arrived, and was a stranger to the place. With him, Frank could of course deal more readily in the affair than he would have been able to do with Mr. Pine.

Morning came. Not the morning of the wedding, but the one following the decisive interview between Frank and Margaret. Frank made some plea at home for going to a certain town—which we will here call Tello—in search of the ring and the marriage license. It happened that the Raynors had acquaintances there; and Edina unsuspectingly bade Frank call and see them. Frank went by rail, and was back again before dusk.

Taking his tea at home, and reporting to Edina that their friends at Tello were well and flourishing, Frank went out later to call at the rectory. It was a gloomy kind of dwelling, the front windows looking out upon the graves in the churchyard. Mr. Backup was seated at his early and frugal supper of bread-and-butter and milk when Frank entered. He was a very shy and nervous young man; and he blushed scarlet at being caught eating, as he started up to receive Frank.

"Pray don't let me disturb you," said Frank, shaking hands, and then sitting down in his cordial way. "No, I won't take anything, thank you,"—as the clergyman hospitably handed him the plate of bread-and-butter. "I've not long had tea. Well, just a slice, then."

His taking the bread-and-butter and eating it with great relish, and then, in pure good fellowship, helping himself to another slice, put Mr. Backup considerably at ease: and the two talked and eat simultaneously.

"I am come to ask you to do me a little service, Mr. Backup," began Frank, plunging headlong into the communication he had to make.

"I'm sure I shall be very happy to—to—do anything," murmured Mr. Backup.

"There's a wedding to be celebrated at the church to-morrow morning. The parties wish it to be got over early—at eight o'clock. It won't be inconvenient to you, will it, to be ready for them at that hour?"

"No—I—not at all," stammered the young divine, relapsing into a

state of inward tumult and misgiving. Not as to any doubt of the orthodoxy of the wedding itself, but as to whether he should be able to get over his part of it satisfactorily. He had never married but one couple in his life: and then he had made the happy pair kneel down at the wrong places, and contrived to let the bridegroom put the ring on the bride's right-hand finger.

"Not at all too early," repeated he, striving to appear at his ease, lest this ready-mannered, dashing young man should suspect his nervousness on the score and his sense of deficiency. "Is it two of the miners' people?"

"You will see to-morrow morning," replied Frank, laughing, and passing over the question with the most natural ease in the world. "At eight o'clock, then, please to be in the church. You will be sure not to keep them waiting?"

"I will be there before eight," said Mr. Backup, rising as Frank rose.

"Thank you. I suppose it is nothing new to you," lightly added Frank, as a passing remark. "You have married many a couple, I daresay."

"Well—not so many. In my late curacy, the rector liked to take the marriages himself. I mostly did the christenings: he was awkward at holding the babies."

"By the way, I have another request to make," said Frank, pausing at the front door, which the clergyman had come to open for him. "It is, that you would kindly not mention this beforehand."

"Not mention?—I don't quite understand," replied the bewildered young man. "Not mention what?"

"That there's going to be a wedding to-morrow. The parties would not like the church to be filled with gaping miners; they wish it to be got over quite privately."

"I will be sure not to mention it," readily assented Mr. Backup. "For that matter, I don't suppose I shall see anybody between now and then. About the clerk——"

"Oh, I will see him: I'll make that all right," responded Frank. "Good evening."

He went skimming over the grave-mounds to the opposite side of the churchyard, with little reverence, it must be owned, for the dead who lay beneath: but when a man's thoughts are filled with weddings, he cannot be expected to regard graves. Crossing a stile, he was then close to the clerk's dwelling: a low, one-storied cottage with a slanting roof, enjoying the same agreeable view as the rectory. The clerk's wife, a round, rosy little woman, was milking her goat in the shed, her gown pinned up around her.

"Halloa, Mrs. Trim! you are doing that rather late, are you not?" cried Frank.

"Late! I should think it is late for't, Master Frank," answered

Mrs. Trim, in wrath. She was familiar enough with him, from the fact of going to the Doctor's house occasionally to help the servant. "I goes over to Pendon this afternoon to have a dish o' tea with a friend there, never thinking but what Trim would attend to poor Nanny. But no, not a bit of it. Drat all the men!—a set o' helpless bodies. I don't know what work Trim's good for, save to dig the graves."

"Where is Trim?"

"Indoors, sir, a-smoking his pipe."

Frank stepped in without ceremony. Trim, who was sexton as well as clerk, sat at the kitchen window, which looked on to the field at the back. He was a man of some fifty years: short and thin, with scanty locks of iron-grey hair, just as silent as his wife was loquacious, and respectful to his betters. Rising when Frank entered, he put his pipe down in the hearth, and touched his hair.

"Look here, Trim; I want to send you on an errand," said Frank, lowering his voice against any possible eavesdroppers, and speaking in a hurry; for he had patients to see yet to-night. "Can you go a little journey for me to-morrow morning?"

"Sure I can, sir," replied Trim. "Anywhere you please."

"All right. I went to Tello this afternoon, and omitted to call at the post-office for some letters that may be waiting there. You must go off betimes, by the half-past seven o'clock train; get the letters—if there are any—and bring them to me at once. You'll be back again long before the sun has reached the meridian, if you make haste. There's a sovereign to pay your expenses. Keep the change."

"And in what name are the letters lying there, sir?" asked the clerk a thoughtful man at all times, and touching his hair again as he took up the gold piece.

"Name? Oh, mine: Francis Raynor. You will be sure not to fail me?"

The clerk shook his head emphatically. He never did fail anyone.

"That's right. Be away from here at seven, and you'll be in ample time for the train, walking gently. Do not speak of this to your wife, Trim: or to anybody else."

"As good set that there church bell a-clapping as she, sir," replied the clerk, confidentially. "You needn't be afeared o' me, Mr. Frank. I know what they women's tongues be: they don't often get no oiling from me, sir."

And away went Frank Raynor, over the stile and the mounds again, calling back a good evening to Mrs. Trim; who was just then putting up her goat for the night.

Scheming begets scheming. As Frank found. Open and straightforward though he was by nature and by conduct, he had to scheme now. He wanted the marriage kept absolutely secret at present from everybody: save of course from the clergyman who must, of necessity,

take part in it. For this reason he was sending clerk Trim out of the way, to inquire after some imaginary letters.

Another little circumstance turned out in his favour. Eight o'clock was the breakfast hour at Dr. Raynor's. It was clear that if Frank presented himself to time at the breakfast table, he could not be standing before the altar rails in the church. Of course he must absent himself from breakfast, and invent some plea of excuse. But this was done for him. Upon quitting the clerk's and hastening to his patients, he found one of them so much worse that it would be essential to see him at the earliest convenient hour in the morning. And this he said later to the Doctor. When his place was seen vacant at breakfast, it would be concluded by his uncle and Edina that he was detained abroad by the exigencies of the sick man.

But, if Fortune was showing herself to be thus kind to him in some respects, Fate was preparing to be less so. Upon how apparently accidental and even absurd a trifle great events often turn: or, rather, to what great events, affecting life and happiness, one insignificant incident will lead, the world does not need to be told.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WEDDING.

"PAPA, will you come to breakfast?—Oh dear! what is the matter?"

Edina might well ask. She had opened the door of the small consulting room as the clock was chiming eight—the knell of Frank Raynor's bachelorhood—to tell her father that the meal was waiting, when she saw not only the hearth and the hearth-rug, but the Doctor himself enveloped in a cloud of soot, looking as black as Erebus.

"I said yesterday the chimney wanted sweeping, Edina."

"Yes, papa, and it was going to be done next week. Have you been burning more paper in the chimney?"

"Only just a letter: but the wind took it and carried it up. Well, this is a pretty pickle!"

"The room shall be done to-day, papa. It will be all right and ready for you again by night."

Dr. Raynor took off his coat and shook it, and then went up to his room to get the soot out of his whiskers. The fact was, seeing the letter, to which he had set light with a match, go roaring up the chimney, he stooped hastily to try to get it back again, remembering what a recent blazing had done; when at that moment down came a shower of soot.

As he was descending the stairs again, the front door was opened with a burst and a bang (there are no other words so fit to express the mad way in which excited messengers did enter), and told the

Doctor that he was wanted, there and then, by somebody who was taken ill and appeared to be dying. Drinking a cup of coffee standing, and eating a crust as he went, the Doctor followed the messenger. It had all passed so rapidly that Edina had not yet commenced her own breakfast.

"Hester," she said, calling rapidly to the servant maid, "papa has had to go out, and Mr. Frank is not yet in. You shall keep the coffee warm, and I will run at once to Mrs. Trim and see if she can come to-day. We must breakfast later this morning."

Edina hastily put on her bonnet and mantle, and went down the street towards the churchyard. The entrance to the church was at the other end, facing the open country, the parsonage was also: on this side, near to her, stood the clerk's house. She could go round to it without crossing the graveyard; and did so. Trying the door, she found it fastened—which was rather unusual at that hour of the morning. It was nothing for the door to be fastened later, when the clerk and his wife were alike abroad; the one on matters connected with his post, the other doing errands in the village, or perhaps at some house, helping to clean. Edina gave a good sharp knock with the handle of her umbrella, which she had brought with her; for dark clouds, threatening rain, were coursing fiercely about the sky. But the knock brought forth no response.

"Now I do hope she is not out at work to-day!" ejaculated Edina, referring to Mrs. Trim. "The sweep *must* come to the room; and Hester cannot well clean up after him herself with all her other work. There's the ironing about. If she has to do the cleaning to-day, I must do that."

Another knock brought forth the same result—nothing. Edina turned round to face the churchyard, and stood to think. The goat was browsing on the green patch close by.

"If I could find Trim, he would tell me at once whether she's away at work or not. She may have only run out on an errand. It is curious he should be out: this is their breakfast time."

All in a moment, as she stood there in indecision, an idea struck Edina: Mrs. Trim was no doubt dusting the church. She generally did it on Saturday, and this was Thursday: but, as Edina knew, if the woman was likely to be occupied on the Saturday, she took an earlier day for the duty.

Lightly crossing the stile, Edina went through the churchyard and round the church to the entrance porch. Her quick eyes saw that, though apparently shut, the door was not latched; and she pushed it open.

"Yes, of course: Mary Trim expects to be otherwise busy to-morrow and Saturday, and is doing the dusting to-day," spoke Edina to herself, deeming the appearances conclusive. "Well, she will have to make haste here, and come to us as soon as she can."

But it was no Mrs. Trim with her gown turned up about her waist, a round apron on, and a huge black bonnet perched forward on her head—for that was her usual church-cleaning costume—that Edina saw as she went gently through the inner green baize door. A very different sight met her eyes; a soft murmur of reading broke upon her ears. The church was not large, as compared with some churches, though of fairly good size for a country parish: and she seemed to come direct upon the solemn scene that was being enacted. At the other end, before the altar, stood, side by side, Frank and Margaret St. Clare: facing them was the new clergyman, Mr. Backup, book in hand.

Edina was extremely practical; but at first she could really not believe her eyesight. She stood perfectly motionless, gazing at them like one in a trance. They did not see her; and Mr. Backup's eyes were fixed on his book—which, by the way, seemed to tremble a little in his hands, as though he were being married himself. Coming to a momentary pause, he went on again in a raised voice; and the words fell thrillingly on the ear of Edina.

"I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful."

The words, word by word, fell not only on Edina's ear; they touched her soul. Oh, was there no impediment? Ought these two silly people, wedding one another in this stolen fashion, and in defiance of parental authority—ought they to stand silent under this solemn exhortation, letting it appear that there was none? Surely this deceit ought, of itself, to constitute grave impediment! Just for the moment it crossed Edina's mind to stand forward, and beg them to reflect, to reflect well, ere this ceremony went on to the end. But she remembered how unfitting it would be: she knew that she possessed no manner of right to interfere with either the one or the other.

Drawing softly back within the door, she let it close again without noise, and made her way out of the churchyard. It appeared evident that neither the clerk nor his wife was in the church: and, if they had been, Edina could not have attempted then to speak to them.

Like one in a dream, went she, up the street again towards home. The clouds had become darker, and seemed to chase each other more swiftly and wildly. But Edina no longer heeded the wind or the weather. They might, in conjunction with burning paper, send the soot down every chimney in the house, for all the moment it was to her just now. She was deeply plunged in a most unpleasant reverie. A reverie which was showing her many future complications for Frank Raynor.

"Good morning, Miss Edina! You be abroad early, ma'am."

The voice was Mrs. Trim's: the black bonnet, going down with the rest of her in a curtsey, was hers also. She carried a small brown jug in her hand, and had met Edina close to the Doctor's house. Edina came out of her dream.

"I have been to see after you, Mrs. Trim, and could not get in. The door was locked."

"Dear now, and I be sorry, Miss Edina! I just went to carry a drop o' coffee and a morsel of hot toast to poor Granny Sandon: who've got nobody much to look after her since Rosaline Bell left. So I just locked the door, and brought the key away with me, as much to keep the Nannygoat out as for safety. She've got a way of loosing herself, Miss Edina, clever as I thinks I ties her, and of coming into the house: and they goats butts and bites at things, and does no end o' mischief."

"Your husband is out, then?"

"He've gone off somewhere by rail, Miss Edina. I couldn't get out of him where, though, nor what it were for. They men be closer nor wax when they want to keep things from ye; and Trim, he be always close. It strikes me, though, he be went somewhere for Mr. Raynor."

"Why do you think that?" cried Edina, quickly.

"Well, I be sure o' one thing, Miss Edina—that Trim had no thought o' going off anywhere when I come home last evening from Pendon; for after we had had a word or two about his not seeing to the goat, he said he was going to do our garden up to-day: which wouldn't be afore it wants it. Mr. Frank, he come in then, and was talking to Trim in the kitchen, they two together; and, agoing to bed, Trim asks for a clean check shirt, and said he was a-starting out in the morning on business. And, sure enough, he have went, Miss Edina, and I found out as he've went by one o' they trains."

Edina said no more. She marshalled the talkative woman indoors to look at the state of the Doctor's room, and to tell her it must be cleaned that day. Mrs. Trim took off her shawl there and then, and began to get ready for the work.

The Doctor had returned, and Hester was carrying the breakfast in. Edina took her place at the table, and poured out her father's coffee.

"Is Frank not in yet?" he asked, as she handed it to him.

"Not yet, papa."

"Why, where can he be? He had only Williamson to see."

Edina did not answer. She appeared to be intent on her plate. Fresh and fair and good she looked this morning, in her new gingham dress, purple spots on a cream-coloured ground; but she seemed to be lost in thought. The Doctor observed it.

"You are troubling yourself about that mess in my study, child!"

"Oh no, indeed I am not, papa. Mary Trim is here."

"Are you sure Frank's not in the surgery, Edina?" said Dr. Raynor again presently.

Knowing where Frank was, and the momentous ceremony he was taking part in—though by that time it had probably come to an end—Edina might with safety assure the Doctor that he was not in the surgery. Dr. Raynor let the subject drop: Frank had been called in to some fresh patient, he supposed, on his way home from Williamson's; and Edina, perhaps dreading to be further questioned, speedily ended her breakfast, and went to look after Mrs. Trim and the household matters.

When the Reverend Mr. Backup awoke from his slumbers that morning, the unpleasant thought flashed on his mind that he had a marriage ceremony to perform. Looking at his watch, he found it to be half-past seven, and up he started in a flurry. Having lain awake half the night, he had over-slept himself.

"Has the clerk been here for the key of the church, Betsey?" he called out to the old servant, just before he went out.

"No, sir."

It wanted only about eight minutes to eight then. Mr. Backup, feeling somewhat surprised, for he had found clerk Trim particularly attentive to his duties, walked along the passage to the kitchen, and took the church key from the nail where it was kept. Opening the church himself, he then went round to the clerk's house, and found it locked up.

Quite a hot tremor seized him. *Without* the clerk and his experience, it would be next-door to impossible for him to get through the service. Alone, he might break down. He should not know where to place the couple; or when to tell them to kneel down, when to stand up; or where the ring came in, or anything.

Where *was* the clerk? Could he have made some mistake as to the time fixed? However, it wanted yet some minutes to eight. Crossing the churchyard, he entered the church, put on his surplice, fetched the prayer-book into the vestry, and began studying the marriage service as therein written.

Frank Raynor came up to the church a minute after the clergyman entered it, and waited in the porch, looking out for his intended bride. Eight o'clock struck; and she had promised to be there before it. Why did she not come? Was her courage failing her? Did the black clouds, which were gathering overhead, appall her? Had Mrs. St. Clare discovered all, and was preventing her? Frank thought it must be one or other of these calamities.

There he stood, within the shelter of the porch, glancing out to the right and to the left. He could not go to meet her because he did not

know which way she would come : whether by the sheltered road-way, or across the Bare Plain. That was one of the minor matters they had forgotten to settle between themselves.

As Frank was gazing this way and that, and getting into as much of a flurry as was possible for one of his easy temperament to get, soft, hasty steps were heard approaching ; and Margaret, nervous, panting, agitated, fell into his arms.

"My darling ! I thought you must be lost."

"I could not get away before, Frank. Of all mornings, Lydia must needs choose this to send Tabitha to my room for some books from the shelves. Now, these did not do ; then, the others did not do : the woman did nothing but run in and out. And the servants were about the passages : and oh, I thought I should never get away !"

A moment given to soothe her, to still her beating heart, and they entered the church together. Margaret threw off the thin cloak she had worn over her pretty morning dress of white-and-peach sprigged muslin, almost as delicate as white. She went up the church, flushing and paling, on Frank's arm : Mr. Backup came out of the vestry to meet them. In a few flowing and plausible words, Frank explained that it was himself who required the parson's services, handed him the license, and begged him to get the service over as soon as possible.

"The clerk is not here," answered the bewildered man.

"Oh, never mind him," said Frank. "We don't want him."

An older and less timid clergyman might have said, I cannot marry you under these circumstances : all Mr. Backup thought of was the getting through his own part in it. It certainly did strike him as being altogether very strange : the question even crossed him whether he was doing right and legally : but the license was in due form, and in his inexperience and his nervousness he did not make inquiries, or raise objections. When he came to the question, Who giveth this Woman to be married to this Man, and there was no response, nobody indeed to respond, he visibly hesitated : but he did not dare to refuse to go on with the service. Such an assumption of authority was utterly beyond the Reverend Mr. Backup. He supposed that the clerk was to have acted : but the clerk, from some inexplicable cause, was not present. Perhaps he had mistaken the hour. So the service proceeded to its close, and Francis Raynor and Margaret St. Clare were made man and wife.

They proceeded to the vestry ; the clergyman leading the way, Frank leading his bride, her arm within his, the ring that bound her to him encircling her finger. After a hunt for the register book, for he did not know where it was kept, Mr. Backup found it, and entered the record of the marriage. Frank affixed his signature, Margaret hers ; and then the young clergyman seemed at a stand-still, looking about him helplessly.

"I—ah—there are no witnesses to the marriage," said he. "It is customary ——"

"We must do without them in this case," interrupted Frank, as he laid a fee of five guineas quietly down. "It does not require witnesses to make it legal."

"Well—no—I—I conclude not," hesitated the clergyman, blushing as he glanced at the gold and silver, and thinking how greatly too much it was, and how rich this Mr. Raynor must be.

"And will you do me and my wife a good turn, Mr. Backup," spoke Frank, ingenuously, as he clasped the clergyman's hand, and an irresistible smile of entreaty shone on his attractive face. "*Keep it secret.* I may tell you, now it is done and over, that nobody knows of this marriage. It is, in fact, a stolen one; and just at present we do not wish it to be disclosed. We have our reasons. In a very short while, it will be openly avowed; but until then, we should be glad for it not to be spoken of. I know we may depend upon your kindness."

Leaving the bewildered parson to digest the information, to put off his surplice and to lock up the register book, Frank escorted his bride down the aisle. When she stopped to take up her cloak and parasol, he, knowing there were no lookers-on, save the ancient and empty pews, folded her in his arms and kissed her fervently.

"Oh Frank! Please!—don't!—we are in church, remember." And there, what with agitation and nervous fear, the bride burst into a fit of hysterical tears.

"Daisy! For goodness' sake!—not here. Compose yourself, my love. Oh, pray don't sob like that!"

A moment or two, and she was tolerably calm again. No wonder she had given way. She had literally shaken from head to foot all through the service. A dread of its being interrupted, a nervous terror at what she was doing, held possession of her. Now that it was over, she saw she had done wrong, and wished it undone. Just like all the rest of us! We do wrong first, and bewail it afterwards.

"You remain in here, please Frank: let me go out alone," she said, a sob catching her breath. "It would not do, you know, for us to go out together, lest we might be seen. Good-bye," she added, timidly holding up her hand.

They were between the green baize door now and the outer one. Frank knew as well as she did that it would be imprudent to leave the church together. He took her hand and herself once more to him, and kissed her fifty times.

"God bless and keep you, my darling! I wish I could see you safely home."

Daisy's suggestion, a night or two ago, of their leaving the church by different doors, had to turn out but a pleasant fiction, since the church possessed but one door. She lightly glided through it when

Frank released her, and went towards home by way of the shady road, her veil drawn over her face, her steps fleet. He remained where he was, not showing himself, until she should be at a safe distance.

"If I can but get in without being seen!" thought poor Daisy, her heart beating as she sped along. "Mamma and Lydia will not be downstairs yet, I know; and all may pass over happily.—What a high wind it is!"

The wind was high indeed, carrying Daisy nearly off her feet. It took her cloak and whirled it over her head in the air. As ill-luck had it, terrible ill-luck Daisy thought, who should meet her at that moment but the Trennach dressmaker. She had been to the Mount to try dresses on.

"Mrs. St. Clare is quite in a way about you, Miss Margaret," spoke the young woman, who was not pleased at having had her walk partly for nothing. "They have been searching everywhere for you."

"I did not know you were expected this morning," said poor Daisy, after murmuring some explanation of having "come out for a walk."

"Well, Miss Margaret, your mainma told me to come whenever it was most convenient to me: and that's early morning, or late in the evening, so as not to take me out of my work in the day-time. I thought I might just catch you and Miss St. Clare when you were dressing, and could have tried on my bodies without much trouble to you."

"What bodies are they?" asked Margaret. "I did not know that any were being made."

"They are dresses for travelling, miss. Mrs. St. Clare gave me a pattern of the material she would like, and I have been getting them."

"Oh, for travelling," repeated Margaret, whose mind, what with one thing and another, was in a perfect whirl. "Will you like to go back, and try mine on now?"

But the dressmaker declined the proposition. She was nearer Trennach now than she was to the Mount, and her apprentice had no work to go on with till she got home to set it for her. Appointing the following morning, she continued her way.

Daisy continued hers. It was a most unlucky thing that the dressmaker should have gone to the Mount that morning, of all others! What a fuss there would be! and what excuse could she make for her absence from home? There was but one, as it seemed to Daisy, that she could make—out for a walk.

But the shifting clouds had gathered in one dense black mass overhead, and the rain came pouring down. Daisy had brought no umbrella: nothing but a fashionable parasol about large enough for a doll: one cannot be expected on such an occasion to be as provident as was the renowned Mrs. MacStinger. The wind took Daisy's cloak, as before; the drifting rain half blinded her. Before she reached home,

her pretty muslin dress, and her dainty parasol, and herself also, were wringing wet.

"Now where have you been?" demanded Mrs. St. Clare, pouncing upon Daisy in the hall and backed by Tabitha; while Lydia, who had that morning got up betimes, thanks to the exacting dressmaker, looked on from the door of the breakfast-room.

"I went for a walk," gasped Daisy, fully believing all was about to be discovered. "The rain overtook me."

"What a pickle you are in!" commented Lydia.

"Where have you been for a walk?" proceeded Mrs. St. Clare, who was evidently angry.

"Down the road," said Daisy, with a kind of sobbing jerk, the result of emotion and fear. "It—it is pleasant to walk a little before the heat comes on. I—I did not know it was going to rain."

"Pray, how long is it since you found out that it is pleasant to walk a little before the heat comes on?" retorted Mrs. St. Clare, with severe sarcasm. "How many mornings have you tried it?"

"Never before this morning, mamma," replied Daisy, with ready earnestness, for it was the truth.

"And pray with whom have you been walking?" put in Lydia, with astounding emphasis. "Who brought you home?"

"Not anyone," choked Daisy, swallowing down her tears. "I walked home by myself. You may ask Mrs. Hunt: she met me. Mamma, may I go up and change my things?"

Mrs. St. Clare said neither yes nor no, but gave tacit permission by stretching out her hand to point to the staircase. Daisy ran the gauntlet of the three faces as she passed on: her mother's was stern, Lydia's supremely scornful, Tabitha's discreetly prim. The two ladies turned into the breakfast parlour, and the maid retired.

"It is easy enough to divine what Daisy has been up to," spoke Lydia, whose speech was not always braced à la mode. She sat back in an easy-chair, sipping her chocolate, a pink cloak trimmed with swansdown drawn over her shoulders; for the rain and the early rising had made her feel chilly.

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. St. Clare, in a cross tone. She detested these petty annoyances.

"I do, though," returned Lydia. "Daisy has been out to meet Frank Raynor. Were I you, mamma, I should not allow her so much liberty."

"Give me the sugar, Lydia, and let me have my breakfast in peace."

Daisy, locking her door, burst into a fit of hysterical tears. Her nerves were utterly unstrung. It was necessary to change her wet garments, and she did so, sobbing wofully all the while. She wished she had not done what she had done; she wished that Frank could be by her side to encourage and shield her. When she had completed

her toilet, she took the wedding ring from her finger, attached it to a bit of ribbon, and hid it in her bosom.

"Suppose I should never, never be able to wear it openly?" thought Daisy, with a sob and a sigh. "Suppose Frank and I should never see each other again!—never be able to be together? If mamma carries me off abroad, and he stays here, one of us might die before I came back again."

## CHAPTER XII.

### UNDER THE EVENING STARS.

"CAN you spare me a moment, Frank?"

"Fifty moments if you like, Edina," was the ready answer in the ever-pleasant tone. "Come in."

The day had gone on to its close, and Edina had found no opportunity of speaking to Frank alone. The secret, of which she had unexpectedly gained cognisance that morning, was consuming her mind. To be a party to it, and to keep that fact from Frank, was impossible to Edina. Tell him, she must: and the sooner the better. After tea, he and the Doctor had sat persistently talking together until dusk, when Frank had to go out to visit a fever-patient in Bleak Row. Running upstairs to change his coat, Edina had thought the opportunity had come, and followed him to his chamber.

She went in after his hearty response to her knock. Frank, quick in all his movements, already had his coat off, and was taking the old one from the peg where it hung. Edina sat down by the drawers.

"Frank," she said in a low tone—and she disliked very much indeed to have to say it, "I chanced to go into the church this morning soon after eight o'clock. I—I saw you there."

"*Did you?*" cried Frank, coming to a pause with his coat half on. "And—did you see anything else, Edina?"

"I believe I saw all there was to see, Frank. I saw you standing with Margaret St. Clare at the altar rails, and Mr. Backup marrying you."

"Well, I never!" cried Frank, with amazing ease and equanimity, just the same that he might have maintained had she said she saw him looking on at a christening. "Weren't you surprised, Edina?"

"Surprised, and a great deal more, Frank. Shocked. Grieved."

"I say, though, whatever took you to the church at that early hour, Edina?"

"Chance: it may be said. Though I am one of those, you know, who do not believe such a thing as chance exists. I went after Mrs. Trim, found her house shut up, and thought she might be in the church,

cleaning it. Oh, Frank! how could you do anything so desperately imprudent?"

"Well, I hardly know. Don't scold me, Edina."

"I have no right to scold you," she answered. "And scolding would be of no use now the thing is done. Nevertheless, I must tell you what a very wrong step it was to take; lamentably imprudent: and I think you must, yourself, know that it was. I could never have believed it of Margaret St. Clare."

"Do not blame Daisy, Edina. I persuaded her to take it. Mrs. St. Clare has been talking of marching her off abroad; and we wanted, you see, to secure ourselves against separation."

"And what are you going to do, Frank?"

"Oh, nothing," said easy Frank. "Daisy's gone back to the Mount, and I am here as usual. As soon as I can make a home for her, I shall fetch her away."

"Make a home where?"

"In some place where there's a likelihood of a good practice. London, I daresay."

"But how are you to live? A good practice does not spring up in a night, like a mushroom."

"That's arranged," replied Frank, as perfectly confident himself that it was arranged as that Edina was sitting on the low chair, and he settling his shoulders into his coat. "My plans are all laid, Edina, and Uncle Hugh knows what they are—and it was in pursuance of them that I went over to Eagles' Nest. I will tell you about it to-morrow: there's no time now."

"Papa does not know of what took place this morning?"

"Not that. Nobody knows of that. We don't want it known, if we can help it, until the time comes when all the world may know."

"Meaning until you have gained the home, Frank?"

"Meaning until I and Daisy enter upon it," said sanguine Frank.

Edina's hand—her elbow resting on her knee—was raised to support her head: her fingers played absently with her soft brown hair: her dark, thoughtful eyes, gazing before her, seemed to see nothing. Whether it might arise from the fact that in her early days of privation, when Dr. Raynor's means were so narrow, she had become practically acquainted with some dark phases of existence, or whether it was the blight that had been cast on her heart in its sweet spring-time, certain it was, that Edina Raynor was no longer of a sanguine nature. Where Frank saw only sunshine in prospective, she saw shadow. And a great deal of it.

"You should have made sure of the home first."

"Before making sure of Daisy? Not a bit of it, Edina. We shall get along."

"That's just like you, Frank," she exclaimed, petulantly, in her

vexation. "You would as soon marry ten wives as one, the law allowing it, so far as never giving a thought to what you were to do with them."

"But the law would not allow it," laughed Frank.

"It is your great fault—never to think of consequences."

"Time enough for that, Edina, when the consequences come."

She did not make any rejoinder. To what use? Frank Raynor would be Frank Raynor to the end of time. It was his nature.

"It is odd, though, is it not, that you, of all Trennach, should just happen to have caught us!" he exclaimed, alluding to the ceremony of the morning. "But you'll not betray us, will you, Edina?— I must be off down, or Uncle Hugh will be calling to know what I'm doing."

Edina rose, with a sigh. "No, I will not betray you, Frank: you know there is no danger of that: and if I can help you and Daisy in any way, I will do it. I was obliged to tell you what I had seen. I could not keep from you the fact that it had come to my knowledge."

As Frank leaped downstairs, lighted-hearted as a boy, Dr. Raynor was crossing from the sitting-room to the surgery. He halted to speak.

"I forgot to tell you, Frank, that you may as well call this evening on Dame Bell: you will be passing her door."

"Is Dame Bell ill again?" asked Frank.

"I fear so. A woman came for some medicine for her to-day."

"I thought she was at Falmouth."

"She is back again, it seems. Call and see her as you go along: you have plenty of time."

"Very well, Uncle Hugh."

The Bare Plain might be said to deserve its name very especially this evening as Frank traversed it. In the morning the wind had been high, but nothing to what it was now. It played amid the openings surrounding the Bottomless Shaft, going in with a whirr, coming out with a rush, and shrieked and moaned fearfully. The popular belief indulged in by the miners was, that this unearthly shrieking and moaning, which generally disturbed the air on these boisterous nights, proceeded not from the wind, but from Dan Sandon's ghost. Frank Raynor had no faith in the ghost—Dan Sandon's, or any other—but he shuddered as he hastened by.

The illness (more incipient than declared) from which Mrs. Bell had been suffering, seemed to cease with her trouble. Her husband's mysterious disappearance was followed by much necessary exertion, both of mind and body, on her own part; and her ailments nearly left her. Dr. Raynor suspected—perhaps knew—that the improvement was but temporary: but he did not tell her so. Dame Bell moved briskly about her house, providing for the comforts of her lodgers, and waiting for the husband who did not come.

Rosaline did not come, either. And her prolonged absence seemed to her mother most unaccountable, her excuses for it unreasonable. As the days and the weeks had gone on, and Rosaline's return seemed to be no nearer than ever, Dame Bell grew angry. She at length made up her mind to go to Falmouth, and bring back the runaway with her own hands.

Easier said than done, that : as Mrs. Bell found. When she, after two days' absence, returned to her home on the Bare Plain, she returned alone : her daughter was not with her. This was only a few days ago. The dame had been ailing ever since, some of the old symptoms having come back again—the result perhaps of the travelling—and she had that day sent a neighbour to Dr. Raynor's for some medicine.

Frank Raynor made the best of his way across the windy plain, leaving the moans and shrieks behind him, and lifted the latch of Dame Bell's door. She stood at the table, ironing by candle-light, her feet upon an old mat to keep them from the draught of the door. Frank, making himself at home as usual, sat down by the ironing board, telling her to go on with her occupation, and inquired into her ailments.

"You ought not to have taken the journey, mother," said Frank, promptly, when the questions and answers were over. "Travelling is not good for you."

"But I could not help taking it," returned Dame Bell, shaking out a coarse whitey-brown shirt belonging to one of her lodgers, and beginning upon its wristbands. "When Rosaline never came home, and paid no attention to my ordering her to come, it was time I went after her, to bring her back."

"She has not come back?"

"No, she has not," retorted Dame Bell, ironing away at so vicious a rate that it seemed a marvel the wristbands did not come off the shirt. "I couldn't get her to come, Mr. Frank. Cords wouldn't have dragged her. Of all the idiots!—to let those Whistlers frighten her away from a place for good, like that!"

"The Whistlers?" mechanically repeated Frank, his eyes, just as mechanically, fixed on the progress of the ironing.

"It's they Whistlers, and nothing else," said Mrs. Bell. "I didn't send word to her or her aunt that I was on the road to Falmouth : I thought I'd take 'em by surprise. And I declare to you, Mr. Frank, I hardly believed my eyes when I saw Rosaline. It did give me a turn. I was that shocked——"

"But why?" interrupted Frank.

"She's just as thin as a herring. You wouldn't know her, sir. When I got to the place, there was John Pellet's shop-window all alight with a big gas flame inside, a-lighting up the tins and fire-irons, and that, which he shows in it. I opened the side door, and went straight up

the stairs to the room overhead, knowing I should most likely find Rosaline there, for it's the room my sister (Pellet's wife) does her millinery work in. My sister was there, standing up with her back to me, a bonnet lodged on each of her two outstretched hands, as if she was comparing the blue bows in one with the pink bows in t'other; and close at the middle table, putting some flowers in another bonnet, was a young woman in black. I didn't know her at first. The gas was right on her face, but I didn't know her. She looked straight over at me, and I thought what a white and thin and pretty face it was, with large violet eyes and dark circles round 'em: but as true as you are there, Mr. Frank, I didn't know her for Rosaline. 'Mother!' says she, standing up: and I a'most fell down on the nearest chair. 'Whatever has come to you, child?' I says, as she steps round to kiss me; 'you look as though you had one foot in the grave, and the other out of it.' At that she turns as red as a rose: and what with the bright colour, and the smile she gave, she looked a little more like herself. But there: if I talked till I tired you, sir, I could make out no more than that: she's looking desperately ill and wretched, and she won't come home again."

Frank made no rejoinder. The ironing went on vigorously: and Mrs. Bell's narrative with it.

"All I could say was of no use: back with me she'd not consent to come. All her aunt could say was of no use. For when she found how lonely I was at home here, and how much I wanted Rosaline, my sister, though loth to part with her, said nature was nature, and a girl should not go against her mother. But no persuasion would bring Rosaline to reason: she'd live with me, and glad to, she said, if I'd go and stay at Falmouth, but she could not come back to Trennach. Pellet and Pellet's wife both tried to turn her: all in vain."

"Did she give any reason for not coming?" questioned Frank: and one, more observant than Dame Bell, might have been struck with the low, subdued tone he spoke in.

"She didn't give any reason, of her own accord, Mr. Frank, but I got it out of her. 'What has Trennach done to you, and what has the old house on the Plain done to you, that you should be frightened at it?' I said to her. For it's easy enough to be gathered that she is frightened in her mind, Mr. Frank, and Pellet's wife had noticed the same ever since she went there. 'Don't say such things, mother,' says she, 'it is nothing.' 'But I will say it,' says I to her, 'and I know what the cause of it is—just the fright you got that Tuesday night from they Seven Whistlers, and a fear that you might hear them again if you came back; and a fine simpleton you must be for your pains!' And so she is."

"Ah yes, the Seven Whistlers," repeated Frank, absently.

"She could not contradict me. She only bursts into tears and begs

of me not to talk of 'em. Not talk, indeed! I could have shook her, I could!"

"We cannot always help our fears," said Frank.

"But for a girl to let they sounds (which nobody yet has found out the top or the tail of, or what they be) scare her out of house and home and country, is downright folly," pursued Dame Bell, unable to relinquish the theme, and splitting the button of the shirt collar in two at one stroke of the hasty iron. "And she must fright and fret herself into a skeleton besides!—Bother take these bone buttons! they be always a-snapping.—But there," she resumed, in an easier tone, after folding the shirt, "I suppose she can't help it. Her father was just as much afraid of 'em. He never had an atom o' fresh colour in his face from the Sunday night he heard they Whistlers till the Tuesday night when he disappeared. It had a curious grey look on it all the while."

Frank rose. He remembered the grey look well enough. "If Rosaline likes Falmouth best she is better there, Mrs. Bell. I should not press her to return."

"If pressing would do any good, she'd get her share of it," rejoined Mrs. Bell, obstinately. "But it won't. I did press, for the matter of that. When I'd done pressing on my own score, I put it on the score of her father. 'Don't you care to be at home to welcome your poor lost father when he gets back to it—for back he's sure to come, says I, 'sooner or later:' and I'm sure my eyes ran down tears as I spoke. But no: she just turned as white as the grave, Mr. Frank, and shook her head in a certain solemn way of hers, which she must have picked up at Falmouth: and I saw it was of no use, though I talked till doomsday. There she stops, and there she will stop, and I must make the best of it. And I wish they evil Whistlers had been in the sea!"

Frank was in a hurry to depart: but she went on again, after taking breath.

"She is earning money there, and her aunt is glad to have her and takes care of her, and she says she never saw any girl so expert with her fingers and display such taste as Rosaline. But that don't mend the matter here, Mr. Frank, and is no excuse for her being such a goose. 'Come and take a room at Falmouth, mother,' says she, when I was leaving. But I'd like to know what a poor body like me could do in that strange place."

"Well, good evening, Mrs. Bell," said Frank, escaping to the door.

But the loquacious tongue had not finished yet.

"When I was coming back in the train, Mr. Frank, the thought kept running into my mind that perhaps Bell would have got home while I'd been away: and when I looked round the empty house, and he wasn't here, I had a queer feeling of disappointment. Do you think he ever will come, sir?"

Some "queer feeling" seemed to take Frank at the question, and stop his breath. He spoke a few words indistinctly in answer. But Mrs Bell did not catch them.

"And whether it was through that—the expecting to see him and the consequent disappointment—I don't know, Mr. Frank ; but since then I can't get him out of my mind. Day and night, Bell is in it. I'm beginning to dream of him ; and that's what I've not done yet. Nancy Tomson says that's a good sign. Should you say it was, sir?"

"I—really don't know," was Frank's unsatisfactory reply. And he succeeded in making his exit with the words.

"I *wish* she'd not bring up her husband to me!" he cried to himself, lifting his hat that his brow might get a little of the fresh wind, which blew less fiercely under these cottages. "Somehow she nearly always does do it. I hate to cross the threshold."

A week or two went on : a week or two of charming weather and calm blue skies. The day, fixed for the departure of Mrs. St. Clare from the Mount, came and passed, and she was still in her home, and likely to be in it for some time to come. "Man proposes, but Heaven disposes." Every day of our lives, we learn fresh proofs of that great fact.

On the very day of Daisy's impromptu wedding, her sister Lydia showed herself more than usually ailing and grumbling. She felt cold and shivery, and sat in the pink cloak all day. The next morning she seemed really ill, not fancifully so, was hot and cold alternately : and Dr. Raynor was sent for. The attack turned out to be one of fever. Not as yet of infectious fever—and Dr. Raynor hoped he should prevent its going on to that. But it was rather severe, and required careful watching and nursing.

Of course their departure for foreign lands was out of the question. They could not leave the Mount. Mrs. St. Clare, who was very anxious, for she dreaded infectious fever more than anything else, spent most of her time in Lydia's room. Once in a way, Frank Raynor appeared at the Mount in his uncle's place. Dr. Raynor was given fully to understand that his own attendance was requested, not his nephew's : but he was himself getting to feel worse day by day ; he could not always get over, walking or riding ; and on those occasions Frank went instead. Mrs. St. Clare allowed what, as it appeared, there was no remedy for, and was coldly civil to the young doctor.

But this illness of Lydia's, and Mrs. St. Clare's close attendance in her room, gave more liberty to Daisy. Scarcely an evening passed but she, unsuspected and unwatched, was pacing the shrubberies and the secluded parts of that wilderness of a garden with him—Frank Raynor. There, arm in arm, they walked, and talked together of the hopeful

future ; and the hours seemed to be enchanted, and to fly on golden wings.

"Love took up the glass of time, and turned it in his glowing hands,

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all its chords with might,

Smote the chord of self, which, trembling, passed with music out of sight."

Whatever of reality, of fruition, the future might bring forth, it could never be to them what this present time was, when they wandered together in the sweet moonlight, with the scent of the night flowers around them, and the soft sighing wind, and the hearts' romance.

Never an evening but Daisy stole out to watch from the sheltered gate for the coming of her lover ; scarcely an evening that Frank failed to come. When he did fail, it was unavoidable. Daisy would linger and linger on, waiting and watching, even when all sensible hope of his coming must have died out ; and when compelled to return indoors with a reluctant step, she would think fate cruel to her, and sigh heavily.

"The time may come when we shall live with each other and be together always, in place of just this little evening walk up and down the paths—and oh ! how I wish the time was come !" would say poor Daisy to her own heart.

One evening it was Daisy who failed to be at the trysting-place. Lydia was getting better, was able to sit up a little, morning and evening. The greater danger, feared for her, had been prevented : and under her own good constitution—for she had one, in spite of her grumblings and her imaginary ailments—and Dr. Raynor's successful treatment, she was recovering rapidly. This evening, lying back in an easy-chair, it had pleased her to order Daisy to read to her. Daisy complied willingly : she was ever more ready to help Lydia than Lydia was to accept her help : but when a considerable spell of reading had been got through, and the room was growing dim, Daisy, coming to the end of a chapter, closed the book.

"What's that for ?" asked Lydia, sharply, whose fractiousness was coming back to her with her advance towards convalescence. "Read on, please."

"It is getting dusk," said Daisy.

"Dusk for that large print !—nonsense," retorted Lydia. The book was a popular novel, and she felt interested in it.

"I am tired, Lydia : you don't consider how long I have been reading," cried Daisy, fretting inwardly : for the twilight hour was her lover's signal for approach, and she knew he must be already waiting for her.

"You have only read since dinner," debated Lydia : "not much more than an hour, I'm sure. Go on."

So Daisy was obliged to go on. She dared not display too much anxiety to get away, lest it might betray to them that she had some

motive for wishing it. A secret makes us terribly self-conscious. But by-and-by it did really become too dark to see even the large print of the fashionable novel of the present day, and Lydia exhibited signs of weariness; and Mrs. St. Clare, who had been dozing in another arm-chair, woke up and said Lydia must not listen longer. Daisy ran down to the yellow-room, and sped swiftly through the open glass doors.

It was nearly as dark as it would be. The stars were shining; a lovely opal colour, fading below into green, lingered yet in the west. Frank Raynor, hands in pockets, and whistling softly under his breath, stood in the sheltered walk. A broadish walk, wherethe trees met overhead. Daisy flung herself into his arms, and burst into tears. Tried almost beyond bearing by her forced detention, it was thus her emotion, combined perhaps with a little temper, expended itself.

"Why, Daisy! What in the world is the matter?"

"I could not get to you, Frank. Lydia kept me in, reading to her, all this while."

"Never mind, my darling, now you have come."

"I thought you would go away; I feared you might think I forgot, or something," sighed Daisy.

"As if I could think that! Dry your eyes, my dear one."

Stealing her arm within his own, Frank led her forward, and they began, as usual, to pace the walk. It was their favourite promenade; for it was so retired and sheltered that they felt pretty safe from intruders. There, linked arm-in-arm, or with Frank's arm round her waist, as might be, they paced to and fro; the friendly stars, like twinkling silver, shining down upon them through the branches overhead.

Their theme was ever the same—the future. The hopeful future, that to their eyes looked brighter than those glistening stars. What was it to be for them, and how might they, in their enthusiasm, plan it out? In what manner could Frank best proceed, so as to secure speedily a home-tent, and be able to declare to the world that he and Margaret St. Clare had spent a quarter of an hour in the grey old church at Trennach one windy morning, when he had earned the right to take her away with him and cherish her for life.

To this end the whole of their consultations tended; on this one desirable project all their deliberations centred. The sooner Frank could get away from Trennach, the sooner (as they both so cheerily believed) it would be realized. Never a shadow of doubt crossed either of them in regard to it. Frank was too sanguine, Daisy too inexperienced, to see any dubious clouds. The days to come were to be days of brightness: and both of them were supremely unconscious that such days never come back after the swift passing of life's fair first morning.

"You see, Daisy, the delay is not my fault," spoke Frank. "My unele has been so very unwell this last week or two, that I don't like

to urge the change upon him. Only to-day I said to him, 'You know I am wanting to leave you, Uncle Hugh,' and his reply was, 'Don't speak of it just immediately, Frank : let things be as they are a very little longer.' While he is feeling so ill, I scarcely like to worry him."

"Of course not," said Daisy. "And as long as I can walk about here with you every evening, Frank, I don't care how long things go on as they are now. It was different when I feared mamma was going to carry me off to the end of the world. It was only that fear, you know, Frank, that made me consent to do what I did that morning. I'm sure I tremble yet when I think how wrong and hazardous it was. Anybody might have come into the church."

"Where's your wedding ring, Daisy?" he asked : and it may as well be said that he had never told her somebody did come in.

"Here," she answered, touching the bosom of her dress. "It is always there, Frank."

"I have written to-day to a friend of mine in London, Daisy, asking him if he knows of any good opening for me—or of any old practitioner in a first-class quarter who may be likely to want some younger man to help him. I daresay I shall get an answer, with some news in it, in a day or two."

"I daresay you will. Who is he, Frank?"

"A young fellow named Crisp, with the best heart in the world. He——"

A sudden clutching of his arm by Daisy, just after they had turned in their walk ; a visible shrinking of her frame, as if she would hide herself behind him ; and a faint idea that he saw some slight movement of the foliage at the other end of the avenue, stopped Frank's further words.

"Did you see, Frank?" she whispered. "Did you see?"

"I fancied something stirred, down yonder. What was it?"

"It was Tabitha. I am certain of it. I saw her the moment we turned. She might have been watching us ever so long : all the way up the walk. Oh, Frank, what shall I do? She will go in and tell mamma."

"Let her," said Frank. "The worst she can say is, that we were walking arm-in-arm and talking confidentially. I cannot think why you need be so fearful, Daisy. Your mother must know that we do meet out here, and tacitly sanction it. She used to know it, and sanction it too."

Daisy sighed. Yes, she thought her mother might, at any rate, suspect that they met. It was not so much *that* which Daisy feared. But, the one private act she had been guilty of lay heavily on her conscience ; and she was ever haunted with the dread that any fresh movement would lead to its betrayal.

Saying good-night to each other, for it was growing late, Frank

departed, and Daisy went in. Her mother was shut up in the drawing-room, and she went on straight to her sister's chamber. There an unpleasant scene awaited her. Lydia, not yet in bed—for she had refused to go, and had abused Tabitha for urging it, lay back still in the easy-chair. Could looks have annihilated, Daisy would certainly have sunk from those cast on her by Lydia, as she entered.

And then the storm began. Lydia reproached her in no measured terms, and with utter scorn of tone and manner, for the "clandestine intimacy," as she was pleased to call it, that she, Daisy, was carrying on with Frank Raynor.

It appeared that after the candles were lighted, and Mrs. St. Clare had gone down, Lydia, declining to go to bed, and wanting to be amused, required Daisy to read to her again. Tabitha was sent in search of Daisy, and came back saying she could not find her anywhere: she was not downstairs, she was not in her chamber. "Go and look in the garden, you stupid thing," retorted Lydia: "you know Miss Daisy's for ever out there." Tabitha—who was a meek woman in demeanour, and took abuse humbly—went to the garden as directed, searched about, and at length came upon Miss Daisy in the avenue, pacing it on the arm of Mr. Raynor. Back she went, and reported it to Lydia. And now Lydia was reproaching her.

"To suffer yourself to meet that man clandestinely after night has fallen!" reiterated Lydia. "And to stay out with him!—and to hang upon his arm! You disgraceful girl! And when, all the while, he does not care one jot for *you*! He loves somebody else."

Daisy had received the tirade on herself in silence, but she fired up at this. "You have no right to say *that*, Lydia," she cried. "Whether he loves me, or not, I shall not say, but at any rate, he does not love anyone else."

"Yes, he does," affirmed Lydia.

"He does not," fired Daisy. "If he does, who is it?"

"Nobody in his own station—more shame to him!—It is that girl they call so beautiful—who lost her father. Rose—Rose—what's the name?—Rosaline Bell. Frank Raynor loves her with his whole heart and soul."

"Lydia, how dare you say such a thing?"

"I don't say it. I only repeat it. Ask Trennach. It is known all about the place. They used to be always together—walking on the Bare Plain by night. The girl is gone away for a time; and the gentleman, during her absence, amuses himself with you. Makes love to you to keep his hand in."

Daisy's heart turned sick and faint within her. Not at Lydia's supreme sarcasm, but at the horrible conviction that there must be something in the tale. She remembered that past evening at the dinner-table—and the recollection came rushing into her mind like a barbed

dart—when Sir Arthur Beauchamp and others were questioning Frank about this very girl and her beauty, and she—Daisy—had been struck with the emotion he betrayed ; with his evidently shrinking manner, with the changing hue of his face. Did he in truth love this girl, Rosaline Bell ?—and was she so very beautiful ?

“How did you hear this, Lydia ?” asked Daisy, in a tone from which all spirit was quenched.

“I heard it from Tabitha. She knows about it. You can ask her for yourself.”

And Daisy did ask. As it chanced, the maid at that moment entered the room with some beef-tea for Lydia ; and Daisy, suppressing her pride and her reticence, condescended to question her. Tabitha answered freely and readily, as if there were nothing in the subject to conceal, and with a palpable belief in its truth that told terribly upon Daisy. In fact, the woman did herself implicitly believe it. Mr. Blase Pellet had once favoured her with his version of the story, and Tabitha never supposed that that version existed in Mr. Pellet’s own suspicious imagination, and in that alone.

“I—don’t think it can be *true*, Tabitha,” faltered poor Daisy, her heart beating wildly. “She was not a lady.”

“It’s true enough, Miss Margaret. Blase Pellet wanted her for himself, but she’d have nothing to say to him—or to anybody else except Mr. Raynor. Pellet is related to the Bells, and knew all about it. What he said to me was this : ‘Raynor’s after her for ever, day and night, and she worships the ground he treads on !’ Those were his very words, Miss Margaret.”

Margaret, turning hot and cold, and red and white, made her escape from the room and took refuge in her own. In that first moment of awakening, she felt as though her heart must burst with its bitter pain. Jealousy, baleful jealousy, had taken possession of her : and there is no other passion in this life that can prey upon our bosoms so relentlessly, or touch them with so keen a sting.

(*To be continued.*)

## KETIRA THE GIPSY.

YOU would not have known the place again. Virginia Cottage, the unpretending little homestead, had been converted into a mansion. Hyde Stockhausen had built a new wing at one end, and a conservatory at the other ; and had put pillars before the rustic porch, over which the Virginia creeper climbed.

We heard last month about Ketira the Gipsy : and of the unaccountable disappearance of her daughter, Kettie ; and of the indignant anger displayed by Hyde Stockhausen when it was suggested that he might have kidnapped her. Curiously enough, within a few days of that time, Hyde himself disappeared from Church Dykely : not in the mysterious manner that Kettie had, but openly and with intention.

The inducing cause of Hyde's leaving, as was stated and believed, was a quarrel with his stepfather, Massock. It chanced that the monthly settling-day, connected with the brickfields, fell just after Kettie vanished. Massock came over for it as usual, and was overbearing as usual ; and perhaps Hyde, already in a state of inward irritation, was less forbearing than usual. Any way, ill-words arose between them. Massock accused Hyde of neglecting his interests, and of being too much of a gentleman to look after the work and the men. Hyde retorted : one word led to another, and there ensued a serious quarrel. The upshot was, that Hyde threw up his post. Vowing he would never again have anything to do with old Massock or his precious bricks as long as he lived, he packed up a small portmanteau and quitted Church Dykely there and then, to the intense tribulation of his ancient nurse and servant, Deborah Preen.

"Leave him alone," said Massock roughly. "He'll be back safe enough in a day or two."

"Where is he gone ?" asked Ketira the Gipsy : who, hovering still around Virginia Cottage, had seen Hyde's exit with his portmanteau.

Massock stared at her, and at her red cloak : she had penetrated to his presence to ask the question. He had never before seen Ketira ; never heard of her.

"What is it to you ?" he demanded, in his coarse manner. "Who are *you* ? Do you come here to tell his fortune ? Be off, old witch !"

"His fortune may be told sooner than you care to hear it—if you are anything to him," was the gipsy's answer. And that same night she quitted Church Dykely herself, wandering away to be lost in the "wide wide world."

Massock's opinion, that Hyde would return in a day or two, proved

to be a mistaken one. Rimmer, at the Silver Bear, got a letter from a lawyer in Worcester, asking him to release Mr. Stockhausen from Virginia Cottage—which Hyde had taken for three years. But, this, Rimmer refused to do. So Hyde had to make the best of his bargain: and every quarter, as the quarters went on, the rent was punctually remitted to Henry Rimmer by the lawyer: who gave, however, no clue to his client's place of abode. It was said that Hyde had been reconciled to his uncle, Parson Hyde (now getting into his dotage), and was by him supplied with funds.

One fine evening, however, in the late spring, when not very far short of a twelvemonth had elapsed, Hyde astonished Deborah Preen by his return. After a fit of crying to show her joy, Deborah brought him in some supper and stood by while he ate it, telling him the news of what had transpired in the village since he left.

"Are those beautiful brickfields being worked still?" he asked.

"'Deed but they are then, Master Hyde. A sight o' bricks seems to be made at 'em. Pitt the foreman, he have took your place as manager, sir, and keeps the accounts."

"Good luck to him!" said Hyde, drinking a glass of ale. "That queer old lady in the red cloak: what has become of her?"

"What, that gipsy hag?" cried Preen. "She's dead, sir."

"Dead!"

"Yes, sir, dead: and a good riddance, too. She went away the very night you went, Mr. Hyde, and never came back again. A week or two ago Abel Carew got news that she was dead."

(Shortly before this, some wandering gipsies had set up their camp within a mile or two of Church Dykely. Abel Carew, never having had news of Ketira since her departure, went to them to make inquiries. At first the gipsies seemed not to understand of whom he was speaking; but upon his making Ketira clear to them, they told him she had been dead about a month; of her daughter, Kettie, they knew nothing.)

"She's not much loss," observed Hyde in answer to Deborah: and his face took a brighter look, as though the news were a relief—Preen noticed it. "The old gipsy was as mad as a March hare."

"And ten times more troublesome than one," put in Preen. "Be you come home to stay, master?"

"I daresay I shall," replied Hyde. "As good settle down here as elsewhere: and there'd be no fun in paying two rents."

So we had Hyde Stockhausen amidst us once more. He did not intend to take up with brickmaking again, but to live as a gentleman. His uncle made him an allowance, and he was going to be married. Abel Carew questioned him about Kettie one day when they met on the common, asking whether he had seen her. Never, was the reply of Hyde. So that what with the girl's prolonged disappearance and

her mother's death, it was assumed that we had done with the two gipsies for ever.

Hyde was engaged to a Miss Peyton. A young lady just left an orphan, whom he had met only six weeks ago at some sea-side place. He had fallen in love with her at first sight, and she with him. She had two or three hundred a year : and Hyde, there was little doubt, would come into all his uncle's money ; so he saw no reason why he should not make Virginia Cottage comfortable for her, and went off to the Silver Bear, to talk to Henry Rimmer about it.

The result was, that improvements were put in hand without delay. A wing (consisting of a handsome drawing-room down stairs, and a bed and dressing-room above) was added to the cottage on one side ; on the other side, Hyde built a conservatory. The house was also generally embellished and set in order, and some new furniture brought in. And I think if ever workmen worked quickly, these did ; for the alterations seemed no sooner to be begun than they were done.

"So you have sown your wild oats, Master Hyde," remarked the squire one day in passing, as he stood to watch the finishing touches, then being put to the outside of the house.

"Don't know that I ever had many to sow, sir," said Hyde, nodding to me.

"And what sort of a young lady is this wife that you are about to bring home?" went on the Pater.

Hyde's face took a warm flush and his lips parted with a half smile ; which proved what she was to him. "You will see, sir," he said in answer.

"When is the wedding to be?"

"This day week."

"This day week!" echoed the Squire surprised : and Hyde, who seemed to have spoken incautiously, looked vexed.

"I did not intend to say as much ; my thoughts were elsewhere," he observed. "Don't mention it again, Mr. Todhetley. Even old Deborah has not been told."

"I'll take care, lad. But it is known all over the place that the wedding is close at hand."

"Yes : but not the day."

"When do you go away for it?"

"On Saturday."

"Well, good luck to you, lad ! By the way, Hyde," continued the Squire, "what did they do about that drain in the yard? Put a new pipe?"

"Yes," said Hyde, "and they have made a very good job of it. Will you come and see it?"

Pipes and drains held no attraction for me. While the Pater went through the house to the yard, I strolled outside the front gate and

across to the little coppice to wait for him. It was shady there : the hot midsummer sun was ablaze to-day.

And I declare that a feather might almost have knocked me down. There, amidst the trees of the coppice, like a picture framed round by green leaves, stood Ketira the gipsy. Or Ketira's ghost.

Believing that she was dead and buried, I might have believed it be the latter, but for the red cloth cloak : *that* was real. She was staring at Hyde's house with all the fire of her glittering eyes, looking as though she were consumed by some inward fever.

"Who lives there now?" she abruptly asked me without any other greeting, pointing her yellow forefinger at the house.

"The cottage was empty ever so long," I carelessly said, some instinct prompting me not to tell too much. "Lately the workmen have been making alterations in it. How is Kettie? Have you found her?"

She lifted her two hands aloft with a gesture of despair : but left me unanswered. "These alterations : by whom are they made?"

But the sight of the Squire, coming forth alone, served as an excuse for my making off. I gave her a parting nod, saying I was glad to see her again in the land of the living.

"Ketira the gipsy is here, sir."

"No!" cried the Pater in amazement. "Why do you say that, Johnny?"

"She is there in the coppice."

"Nonsense, lad! Ketira's dead, you know."

"But I have just seen her, and spoken to her."

"Then what did those gipsy-tramps mean by telling Abel Carew that she had died?" cried the Squire explosively, as he marched across the few yards of greensward towards the coppice.

"Abel did not feel quite sure at the time that he and they were not talking of two persons. That must have been the case, sir."

We were too late. Ketira was already half-way along the path that led to the common : no doubt on her road to pay a visit to Abel Carew. And I can only relate what passed there at second hand. Between ourselves, Ketira was no favourite of his.

He was at his early dinner of bread and butter and salad when she walked in and astonished him. Abel, getting over his surprise, invited her to partake of the meal ; but she just waved her hand in refusal, as much as to say that she was superior to dinner and dinner-eating.

"Have you found Kettie?" was his next question.

"It is the first time a search of mine ever failed," she replied, beginning to pace the little room in agitation, just as a tiger paces its confined cage. "I have given myself neither rest nor peace since I set out upon it ; but it has not brought me tidings of my child."

"It must have been a weary task for you, Ketira. I wish you would break bread with me."

"I was helped."

"Helped!" repeated Abel. "Helped by what?"

"I know not yet, whether angel or devil. It has been one or the other:—according as he has, or has not, played me false."

"As who has played you false?"

"Of whom do you suppose I speak but *him*?" she retorted, standing to confront Abel with her deep eyes. "Hyde Stockhausen has in some subtle manner evaded me: but I shall find him yet."

"Hyde Stockhausen is back here," quietly observed Abel.

"Back here! Then it is no false instinct that has led *me* here," she added in a low tone, apparently communing with herself. "Is Ketira with him?"

"No, no," said Abel, vexed at the question. "Kettie has never come back to the place since she left it."

"When did *he* come?"

"It must be about two months ago."

"He is in the same dwelling-house as before! For what is he making it so grand?"

"It is said to be against his marriage."

"His marriage with Ketira?"

"With a Miss Peyton; some young lady he has met. Why do you bring up Ketira's name in conjunction with this matter—or with him?"

She turned to the open casement, and stood there, as if to inhale the sweet scent of Abel's flowers, and listen to the hum of his bees. Her face was working, her strange eyes were gleaming, her hands were clasped to pain.

"I know what I know, Abel Carew. Let him look to it if he brings home any other wife than my Ketira."

"Nay," remonstrated peaceful old Abel. "Because a young man has whispered pretty words in a maiden's ear, and given her, it may be, a moonlight kiss, that does not bind him to marry her."

"And would I have wished to bind him had it ended there?" flashed the gipsy. "No; I should have been thankful that it *had* so ended. I hated him from the first."

"You have no proof that it did not so end, Ketira."

"No proof; none," she assented. "No tangible proof that I could give to you, her father's brother, or to others. But the proof lies in the fatal signs that show themselves to me continually, and in the unerring instinct of my own heart. If the man puts another into the place that ought to be hers, let him look to it."

"You may be mistaken, Ketira. I know not what the signs you speak of can be: they may show themselves to you but to mislead; and nothing is more deceptive than the fancies of one's imagination. Be it as it may, vengeance does not belong to us. Do not *you* put yourself forward to work young Stockhausen ill."

"I work him ill!" retorted the gipsy. "You are mistaking me altogether. It is not I who shall work it. I only see it—and foretell it."

"Nay, why speak so strangely, Ketira? It cannot be that you ——"

"Abel Carew, talk not to me of matters that you do not understand," she interrupted. "I know what I know. Things that I am able to see are hidden from you."

He shook his head. "It is wrong to speak so of Hyde Stockhausen—or of anyone. He may be as innocent in the matter as you or I."

"But I tell you that he is not. And the conviction of it lies here" —striking herself fiercely on the breast.

Abel sighed, and began to put his dinner-plates together. He could not make any impression upon her, or on the notion she had taken up.

"Do you know what it is to have a breaking heart, Abel Carew?" she asked, her voice taking a softer tone that seemed to change it into a piteous wailing. "A broken heart one can bear; for all struggle is over, and one has but to put one's head down on the green earth and die. But a breaking heart means continuous suffering; a perpetual torture that slowly saps away the life; a never-ending aching of soul and of spirit, than which nothing in this world can be so hard to battle with. And for twelve months now this anguish has been mine!"

Poor Ketira! Mistaken or not mistaken, there could be no question that her trouble was grievous to bear; the suspense, in which her days were passed, well-nigh unendurable.

This, that I have told, occurred on Thursday morning. Ketira quitted Abel Carew only to bend her steps back towards Virginia Cottage, and stayed hovering around the house that day and the next. One or another, passing, saw her watching it perpetually, herself partly hidden. Now peeping out from the little coppice; now tramping quickly past the gate, as though she were starting off on a three-mile walk; now stealing to the back of the house, to gaze at the windows. There she might be seen, in one place or another, like a haunting red dragon: her object, as was supposed, being to get speech of Hyde Stockhausen. She did not succeed. Twice she went boldly to the door, knocked, and asked for him. Deborah Preen slammed it in her face. It was thought that Hyde, who then knew of her return and that the report of her death was false, must be on the watch also, to avoid her. If he wanted to go abroad and she was posted at the back, he slipped out in front: when he wished to get in again and caught sight of her red cloak illumining the coppice, he made a dash in at the back gate, and was lost amid the kidney beans.

By this time the state of affairs was known to Church Dykely: a rare dish of nuts for the quiet place to crack. Those of us who

possessed liberty made pleas for passing by Virginia Cottage to see the fun. Not that there was much to see, except a glimpse of the red cloak in this odd spot or in that.

"Stockhausen must be silly!" cried the Squire. "Why does he not openly see the poor woman and inquire what it is she wants with him? The idea of his shunning her in this absurd way! What does he mean by it, I wonder?"

Now, before telling more, I wish to halt and say a word. That much ridicule will be cast on this story by the intelligent reader, is as sure as that apples grow in summer. Nevertheless, I am but relating what took place. Certain things in it were curiously strange; not at all explainable hitherto; possibly never to be explained. I chanced to be personally mixed up with it, so to say, in a degree; from its beginning, when Ketira and her daughter first appeared at Abel Carew's, to its ending, which has yet to be told. For that much I can vouch—I mean what I was present at. But you need not accord belief to the whole unless you like.

Chance, and nothing else, caused me to be sent over this same evening to Mr. Duffham's. It was Friday, you understand; and the eve of the day Hyde Stockhausen would depart preparatory to his marriage. One of our maids had been ailing for some days with what was thought to be a bad cold: as she did not get better, but grew more feverish, Mrs. Todhetley decided to send for the doctor, if only as a measure of precaution.

"You can go over to Mr. Duffham's for me, Johnny," she said, as we got up from tea—which meal was generally taken at the manor close upon dinner, somewhat after the fashion that the French take their tasse de café. "Ask him if he will be so kind as to call in to see Ann when he is out to-morrow morning."

Nothing loth was I. The evening was glorious, tempting the world out of doors, calm and beautiful, but very hot yet. The direct way to Duffham's from our house was not by Virginia Cottage: but, as a matter of course, I took it. Going along at tip-top speed until I came within sight of it, I then slackened to a snail's pace, the better to take observations.

There's an old saying, that virtue is its own reward. If any virtue existed in my choosing this circuitous and agreeable route, I can only say that for once the promise was at fault, for I was *not* rewarded. Were Hyde Stockhausen's house a prison, it could not have been much more closely shut up. The windows were closed on that lovely midsummer night; the doors looked tight as wax. Not a glimpse could I catch of as much as the bow of Deborah Preen's mob cap atop of the short bedroom blinds; and Hyde might have been over in Africa for all that could be seen of him.

Neither (for a wonder) was there any trace of Ketira the gipsy.

Her red cloak was nowhere. Had she obtained speech of Hyde, and so terminated her watch, or had she given it up in despair? Any way, there was nothing to reward me for having come that much out of my road, and I went on, whistling dolorously.

But, hardly had I got past the premises and was well on the field path beyond, when I met Duffham. Giving him the message from home, which he said he would attend to, I enlarged on the disappointment just experienced in seeing nothing of anybody.

"Shut up like a jail, is it?" quoth Duffham. "I have just had a note from Stockhausen, asking me to call there. His throat's troubling him again, he says: wants me to give him something that will cure him by to-morrow."

I had turned with the doctor, and went walking with him up the garden, listening to what he said. But I meant to leave him when we reached the door. He began trying it. It was fastened inside.

"I daresay you can come in and see Hyde, Johnny. What do you want with him?"

"Not much; only to wish him good luck."

"Is your master afraid of thieves that he bolts his doors?" cried Duffham to old Preen when she let us in.

"'Twas me fastened it, sir; not' master," was her reply. "That gipsy wretch have been about yesterday and to-day, wanting to get in. I've got my silver about, and don't want it stolen. Mr. Hyde's mother and Massock have been here to dinner; they've not long gone."

Decanters and fruit stood on the table before Hyde. He started up to shake hands, appearing very much elated. Duffham, more experienced than I, saw that he had been taking quite enough wine.

"So you have had your stepfather here!" was one of the doctor's first remarks. "Been making up the quarrel, I suppose."

"He came of his own accord; I didn't invite him," said Hyde, laughing. "My mother wrote me word that they were coming—to give me their good wishes for the future."

"Just what Johnny Ludlow here says he wants to give," said Duffham: though I didn't see that he need have brought my words up, and make a fellow feel shy.

"Then, by Jove, you shall drink them in champagne!" exclaimed Hyde. He caught up a bottle of champagne that stood under the sideboard, from which the wire had been removed, and would have cut the string but for the restraining hand of Duffham.

"No, Hyde; you have had rather too much as it is."

"I swear to you that I have not had a spoonful. It has not been opened, you see. My mother refused it, and Massock does not care for champagne: he likes something heavier."

"If you have not taken champagne you have taken other wine."

"Sherry at dinner, and port since," laughed Hyde.

"And more of it than is good for you."

"When Massock sits down to port wine he drinks like a fish," returned Hyde, still laughing. "Of course I had to make a show of drinking with him. I wished the port at Hanover."

By a dexterous movement, he caught up a knife and cut the string. Out shot the cork with a bang, and he filled three of the tumblers that stood on the sideboard with wine and froth—one for each of us. "Your health, doctor," nodded he, and tossed off his own.

"It will not do your throat good," said Duffham, angrily. "Let me look at the throat."

"Not until you and Johnny have wished me luck."

We did it, and drank the wine. Duffham examined the throat; and told Hyde, for his consolation, that it was not in a state to be trifled with.

"Oh, it's nothing," said Hyde carelessly. "But I don't want it to be bad to-morrow when I travel, and I thought perhaps you might be able to give me something or other to set it to rights to-night. I start at ten to-morrow morning."

"Sore throats are not cured so easily," retorted Duffham. "You must have taken cold."

Telling him he would send in a gargle and a cooling draught, and that he was to go to bed soon, Duffham rose to leave. Hyde opened the glass doors of the room that we might pass out that way, and stepped over the threshold with us. Talking with Duffham, he strolled onwards towards the gate.

"About three weeks, I suppose," he said, in answer to the query of how long he meant to be away. "If Mabel——"

Gliding out of the bushy laurels on one side the path, and planting herself right in front of us, came Ketira the gipsy. Her face looked yellower than ever in the twilight of the summer's evening; her piercing black eyes fiercer. Hyde was taken aback by the unexpected encounter. He started a step back.

"Where's my daughter, Hyde Stockhausen?"

"Go away," he said, in the contemptuous tone one might use to a dog. "I don't know anything of your daughter."

"Only tell me where she is, that I may find her. I ask no more."

"I tell you that I do not know anything of her. You must be mad to think it. Get along with you!"

"Hyde Stockhausen, you lie. *You do know where she is; you know that it is with you she has been.* Heaven hears me say it: deny it if you dare."

His face looked whiter than death. Just for an instant he seemed unable to speak. Ketira changed her tone to one of plaintive wailing.

"She was my one little ewe lamb. What had she or I done to you that you should come as a spoiler to the fold? I *prayed* you not.

Make her your wife, and I will yet bless you. It is not too late. Do not break her heart and mine."

Hyde had had time to rally his courage. A man full of wine can generally call some up, even in the most embarrassing of situations. He scornfully asked the gipsy whether she had come out of Bedlam. Ketira saw how hard he was—that there was no hope.

"It is said that you depart to-morrow to bring home a bride, Hyde Stockhausen. *I counsel you not to do it.* For your own sake, and for the young woman's sake, I bid you beware. The marriage will not bring good to you or to her."

That put Hyde in a towering passion. His words came out with a splutter as he spurned her from him.

"Cease your folly, you senseless old beldame! Do you dare to threaten me? Take yourself out of my sight instantly, before I fetch my horsewhip. And, if ever you attempt to molest me again, I will have you sent to the treadmill."

Ketira stood looking at him while he spoke, never moving an inch. As his voice died away she lifted her forefinger in warning. And anything more impressive than her voice, than her whole manner—anything more startlingly defiant than her countenance, I never wish to see.

"It is well; I go. But listen to me, Hyde Stockhausen; mark what I say. Only three times shall you see me again in life: But each one of those times you shall have cause to remember; and after the last of them you will not need to see me more."

It was a strange threat. That she made it, Duffham could, to this day, corroborate. Pulling her red cloak about her shoulders, she went swiftly through the gate, and disappeared within the opposite coppice.

Hyde smiled; his good humour was returning to him. One can be brave enough when an enemy turns tail.

"Idiotic old Egyptian!" he exclaimed lightly. "What on earth ever made her take the fancy into her head, that I knew what became of Kettie, I can't imagine. I wonder, Duffham, some of you people in authority here don't get her confined as a lunatic!"

"We must first of all find that she is a lunatic," was Duffham's dry rejoinder.

"Why, what else is she?"

"Not that."

"She is; and a dangerous one," retorted Hyde.

"Nonsense, man! Gipsies have queer ways and notions; and—are not to be judged altogether as other people," added the doctor, finishing off (as it struck me) with different words from those he had been about to say. "Good night: and don't take any more of that champagne."

Hyde returned indoors, and we walked away, not seeing a sign of the red cloak anywhere.

"I must say I should not like to be attacked in this manner, were I Hyde," I remarked to Duffham. "How obstinate the old gipsy is!"

"Ah," replied Duffham. "I'd sooner believe her than him."

The words surprised me, and I turned to him quickly. "Why do you say that, sir?"

"Because I do say it, Johnny," was the unsatisfactory answer. "And now good evening to you, lad, for I must send the physick in."

"Just a word, please Mr. Duffham. Do you know where that poor Kettie is?—and did you know that Hyde Stockhausen stole her?"

"No, to both your questions, Johnny Ludlow."

Everybody liked Hyde's wife. A fragile girl with a weak voice, who looked as if a strong wind would blow her away. Duffham feared she was not strong enough to make old days.

Virginia Cottage flourished. Parson Hyde had died and left all his fortune to Hyde: who had now nothing to do but take care of his wife and his money, and enjoy life. Before the next summer came round, Hyde had a son and heir. A fine little shaver, with blue eyes like Hyde's, and good lungs. His mother was a long while getting about again: and then she looked like a shadow, and had a short, hacking kind of cough. Hyde wore a grave face at times, and would say he wished Mabel could get strong.

But Hyde was regarded with less favour than formerly. People did not scruple to call him "villain." And one Sunday, when Mr. Holland told us in his sermon that man's heart was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, the congregation wondered whether he meant it especially for Stockhausen. For the truth had come out.

When Hyde departed to keep his marriage engagement, Ketira the gipsy had again disappeared from Church Dykely. In less than a month afterwards, Abel Carew received a letter from her. She had found Kettie: and she had found that her own instincts against Hyde Stockhausen were not mistaken ones. For all his seeming-fair face and his indignant denials, it was he who had been the thief.

"Of all brazen-faced knaves, that Stockhausen must be the worst!—an adept in cunning, a lying hypocrite!" exploded the Squire.

"I suspected him at the time," said Duffham.

"You did! What were your grounds for it?"

"I had no particular grounds. His manner did not appear to me to be satisfactory; that was all. Of course I was not sure."

"He is a base man," concluded the Squire. And from that time he turned the cold shoulder on Hyde.

But time is a sure healer of wounds; a softener of resentment. As it passed on, we began to forget Hyde's dark points, and to remember his good qualities. Any way, Ketira the gipsy and Ketira's daughter passed out of memory, just as they had passed out of sight.

Suddenly we heard that Abel Carew was preparing to go on a journey. I went off to ask him where he was bound for.

"I am going to see *them*, Master Johnny," he replied. "I don't know how they are off, sir, and it is my duty to see. The child is ill : and I fear they may be wanting assistance, which Ketira is too proud to write and ask for."

"Kettie ill ! What is the matter with her ?"

Abel shook his head. "I shall know more when I get there, sir."

Abel Carew locked up his cottage and began his pilgrimage into Hertfordshire with a staff and a wallet, intending to walk all the way. In a fortnight he was back again, bringing with him a long face.

"It is sad to see the child," he said to me, as I sat in his room listening to the news. "She is no more like the bonnie Kettie that we knew here, than a dead girl's like a living one. Worn out, bent and silent, she sits, day after day and week after week, and her mother cannot rouse her. She has sat so all along."

"But what is the matter with her ?"

"She is slowly dying, sir."

"What of ?"

"A broken heart."

"Oh dear !" said I ; believing I knew who had broken it.

"Yes," said Abel, "*he*. He won her heart's best love, Master Johnny, and she pines for him yet. Ketira says it was his marriage that struck her the death blow. A few weeks she may still linger, but they won't be many."

Very sorry did I feel to hear it : for Ketira's sake as well as Kettie's. The remembrance of the day I had gilded the oak-ball, and her wonderful gratitude for it, came flashing back to me.

And there's nothing more to add to this digression. Except that Kettie died.

The tidings did not appear to affect Hyde Stockhausen. All his thoughts were given to his wife and child. Old Abel had never reproached him by as much as a word : if by chance they met, Abel avoided looking at him, or turned off another way.

When the baby was six months old and began to cut his teeth, he did not appear inclined to do it kindly. He grew thin and cross ; and the parents, who seemed to think no baby ever born could come up to this one, began to be anxious. Hyde worshipped the child ridiculously.

"The boy will do well enough if he does not get convulsions," Duffham said in semi-confidence to some people over his surgery counter. "If *they* come on—why, I can't answer for what the result might be. Fat ? Yes, he is a great deal too fat : they feed him up so."

The surgeon was sitting by his parlour fire one snowy evening shortly after this, when Stockhausen burst upon him in a fine state of agitation ; arms working, breath gone. The baby was in a fit.

"Come, come; don't you give way," cried the doctor, believing Hyde was going into a fit on his own account. "We'll see."

Out of one convulsion into another went the child that night: but in a few days it was better; thought to be getting well. Mr. and Mrs. Stockhausen in consequence felt themselves in the seventh heaven.

"The danger is quite past," observed Hyde, walking down the snowy path with Duffham, one morning when the doctor had been paying a visit; and Hyde rubbed his hands in gleeful relief, for he been like a crazed lunatic while the child lay ill. "Duffham, if that child had died, I think *I* should have died."

"Not a bit of it," said Duffham. "You are made of tougher stuff."

He was about to open the garden gate as he spoke. But, suddenly appearing there to confront them stood Ketira the gipsy. A moment's startled pause ensued. Duffham spoke kindly to her. Hyde recoiled a step or two; as if the sight had frightened him.

"You may well start back," she said to the latter, taking no notice of Duffham's civility. "I told you, you should not see me many times in life, Hyde Stockhausen, but that when you did, I should be the harbinger of evil. Go home, and meet it."

Turning off under the garden hedge, without another word, she disappeared from their view as suddenly as she had come into it. Hyde Stockhausen made a feint of laughing.

"The woman is more mad than ever," he said. "Decidedly, Duffham, she ought to be in confinement."

Never an assenting syllable gave Duffham. He was looking as stern as a judge. "What's that?" he suddenly exclaimed, turning sharply to the house.

A maid servant was flying down the path. Deborah Preen stood at the door, crying and calling as if in some dire calamity. Hyde rushed towards her, asking what was amiss. Duffham followed more slowly. The baby had got another attack of convulsions.

And this time it was for death.

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When these events were happening, Great Malvern was not the overgrown, fashionable place it is now; but a quiet little spot with only a few houses in it, chiefly clustering under the highest of the hills. Amid these houses, one bright May day, Hyde Stockhausen went, seeking lodgings.

Hyde had not died of the loss of the baby. For here he was, alive and well, nearly eighteen months afterwards. That it had been a sharp trial for him nobody doubted; and for his wife also. And when a second baby came to replace the first, it brought them no good, for it did not live a week.

That was in March: two months ago: and ever since Mrs. Stockhausen had been hovering between this world and the next. A fever

and other ailments had taken what little strength she had out of her. *This*, to Hyde Stockhausen, was a worse affliction than even the loss of the children, for she was to him as the very apple of his eye. When somewhat improving, the doctors recommended Malvern. So Hyde had brought her to it with a nurse and old Deborah; and had left them at the Crown Hotel while he looked for lodgings.

He found them in one of the houses down by the abbey. Some nice rooms, quite suitable. And to them his wife was taken. For a very few days afterwards she seemed to be getting better: and then all the bad symptoms returned. A doctor was called in. He feared she might not rally again; that the extreme debility might prevent it: and he said as much to Hyde in private.

Anything more unreasonable than the spirit in which Hyde met this, the Malvern doctor had never seen.

"You are a fool," said Hyde. "Begging your pardon, sir, I should think you don't know your profession. My wife is fifty pounds better than she was at Church Dykely. How can you take upon yourself to say she will not rally?"

"I said she might not," replied the surgeon, who happened to possess a temper mild as milk. "I hope she will with all my heart. I shall do my best to bring it about."

It was an anxious time. Mrs. Stockhausen fluctuated greatly: to-day able to sit up in an easy chair; to-morrow too exhausted to be lifted out of bed. But, one morning she did seem to be ever so much better. Her cheeks were pink, her lips had a smile.

"Ah," said the doctor cheerfully when he went in, "we shall do now, I hope. You are up early to-day."

"I felt so much better that I wanted to get up and surprise you," she answered in quite a strong voice—for her. "And it was so warm, and the world looked so beautiful. I should like to be able to mount one of those donkeys and go up the hill. Hyde says that the view, even from St. Ann's well, is charming."

"So it is," assented the surgeon. "Have you never seen it?"

"No, I have not been to Malvern before."

This was the first day of June. Hyde would not forget the date to the last hour of his life. It was hot summer weather: the sun came in at the open window, touching her hair and her pale forehead as she lay back in the easy chair after the doctor left; a canary at a neighbouring house was singing sweetly; the majestic hills, with their light and shade, looked closer even than they were in reality. Hyde began to lower the blind.

"Don't, please, Hyde."

"But, my darling, the sun will soon be in your eyes."

"I shall like it. Is it not a lovely day! I think it is that which has put new life into me."

"And we shall soon have you up the hill, where we can sit and look all over everywhere. On one or two occasions, when the atmosphere was rarefied to an unusual degree, I have caught the silver line of the Bristol Channel."

"How pleasant it will be, Hyde! To sit there with you, and to know that I am getting well!"

Early in the afternoon, when Mabel lay down to rest, Hyde went strolling up the hill, for the first time since his present stay at Malvern. He got as far as St. Ann's; drank a tumbler of the water, and then paced about, hither and thither, to the right and left, not intending to ascend higher that day. If he went to the summit, Mabel might be awake before he got home again; and he would not have lost five minutes of her waking moments for a mine of gold. Looking at his watch, he sat down on a bench that was backed by some dark trees.

"Yes," he mused, "it will be delightful to sit about here with Mabel, and show her the different points of interest in the landscape. Worcester Cathedral, and St. Andrew's Spire; and the Bristol——"

Some stir behind caused him to turn his head. The words froze on his tongue. There stood Ketira the gipsy. She had been sitting or lying amidst the trees, wrapped in her red cloak. Hyde's look of startled dread was manifest. She saw it; and accosted him.

"We meet again, Hyde Stockhausen. Ah, you have cause to fear!—your face may well whiten to the shivering hue of snow at sight of me! You are alone in the world now—as you left my daughter to be. Once more we shall see one another. Till then farewell."

Recovering his equanimity when left alone, Hyde betook himself down the zig-zag path towards the village, calling the gipsy all the wicked names in the dictionary, and feeling tempted to give her into custody.

At his home, he was met by a commotion. The nurse wore a scared face; Deborah Preen, wringing her hands, burst out sobbing.

Mabel was dead. Had died in a fainting fit.

Leaving his wife in her grave at Malvern, Hyde Stockhausen returned to Church Dykely. We hardly knew him.

A more changed man than Hyde was from that time the world has never seen. He walked about like a melancholy maniac, hands in his coat pockets, eyes on the ground, steps dragging; looking just like one who has some great remorse lying upon his conscience and is being consumed by the past. The most wonderful thing in the eyes of Church Dykely was, that he grew religious: came to church twice on Sunday, stayed for the Sacrament, was good to the poor, gentle and kindly to all. Mr. Holland observed to the Squire that Stockhausen had become a true Christian. He made his will, and altogether seemed to be tired of life.

"Go you, Johnny, and ask him to come over to us sometimes in an evening; tell him it will be a break to his loneliness," said the Squire to me one day. "Now that the poor fellow is ill and repentant, we must let bygones be bygones. I hear that Abel Carew spent half an hour sociably with him yesterday."

I went off as directed. Summer had come round again, for more than a year had now passed since Mabel's death, and the Virginia creeper on the cottage walls was all alight with red flowers. Hyde was pacing his garden in front of it, his head bent.

"Is it you, Johnny," he said, in the patient, gentle tone he now always used, as he held his hand out. He was more like a shadow than a man; his face drawn and long, his blue eyes large and dark and sad.

"We should be so glad if you would come," I added, after giving the message. "Mrs. Todhetly says you make yourself too much of a stranger. Will you come this evening?"

He shook his head slightly, clasping my hand the while, his own feeling like a burning coal, and smiling the sweetest and saddest smile.

"You are all too good for me; too considerate; better far than I deserve. No, I cannot come to you this evening, Johnny: I have not the spirits for it; hardly the strength. But I will come one evening if I can. Thank them all, Johnny, for me."

And he did come. But he could not speak much above a whisper, so weak and hollow had his voice grown. And of all the humble-minded, kindly-spirited individuals that ever sat at our tea-table, the chiefest was Hyde Stockhausen.

"I fear he is going the way of all the Stockhausens," said Mrs. Todhetly afterwards. "But what a beautiful frame of mind he is in!"

"Beautiful, you call it!" cried the Pater. "The man seems to me to be eating his heart out in some impossible atonement. Had I set fire to the church and burnt up all the congregation, I don't think it could have subdued me to that extent."

Of all places, where should I next meet Hyde but at Worcester races! We knew that he had been worse lately, that his mother had come to Virginia Cottage to be with him at the last, and that there was no further hope. Therefore, to see Hyde this afternoon, perched on a tall horse on Pitchcroft, looked more like magic than reality.

"You at the races, Hyde!"

"Yes; but not for pleasure," he answered, smiling faintly; and looking so shadowy and weak that it was a marvel how he could stick on the horse. "I am in search of one who is growing too fond of these scenes. I want to find him—and to say a few last words to him."

"If you mean Jim Massock"—for I thought it could be nobody but young Jim—"I saw him yonder, down by the shows. He was drinking porter outside a booth. How are you, Hyde?"

"Oh, getting on slowly," he said, with a peculiar smile.

"Getting on ! It looks to me to be the other way."

Turning his horse quickly round, after nodding to me, in the direction of the shows and drinking booths, he nearly turned it upon a tall, gaunt skeleton in a red cloak—Ketira the gipsy, She must have sprung out of the crowd.

But oh, how ill she looked ! Hyde was strangely altered ; but not as she was. The yellow face was shrivelled and shrunken, the fire had left her eyes. Hyde checked his horse ; but the animal turned restive. He controlled it with his hand, and sat still before Ketira.

"Yes, look at me," she burst forth. "*For the last time.* The end is close at hand both for you and for me. We shall meet Kettie where we are going."

He leaned from his horse to speak to her : his voice a low sad wail, his words apparently those of deprecating prayer. Ketira heard him quietly to the end, gazing into his face, and then slowly turned away.

"Fare you well, Hyde Stockhausen. Farewell for ever."

Before leaving the course Hyde had an accident. While talking to Jim Massock, some drums and trumpets struck up their noise at a neighbouring show ; the horse started violently, and Hyde was thrown. He thought he was not much hurt and mounted again.

"What else could you expect ?" demanded Duffham, when Hyde got back to Virginia Cottage. "You have not strength to sit a donkey, and you must go careering off to Worcester races on a fiery horse !"

But the fall had done Hyde some inward damage, and it hastened the end. He died that day week.

"Some men's sins go before them to Judgment, and some follow after," solemnly said Mr. Holland the next Sunday from the pulpit. "He who is gone from among us had taken his to his Saviour—and he is now at rest."

"All chance and coincidence," pronounced Duffham, talking over the strange threat of Ketira the gipsy and its stranger working out. "Yes ; chance, I say, each of the three times. The woman, happening to be at hand, must have known by common report that the child was in peril ; she may have learnt at Malvern that the wife was dying ; and any goose with eyes in its head might have read coming death on *his* face that afternoon on Pitchcroft. That's all about it, Johnny."

Very probably. The reader can exercise his own judgment. I only know it all happened.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.

## THE LAKES OF SAVOIE.

*By the Author of "A NIGHT IN A MONASTERY."*

**L**AST month we found ourselves amidst the charms of Rousseau's old home, les Charmettes, the blue waters of the Lac du Bourget, and the solitude of the tombs of the kings of Sardinia—the Abbey of the Haute-Combe.

In this concluding paper upon the attractions of this part of the



CHATEAU AND CHAPEL ROYAL, CHAMBERY.

world, let us endeavour to bring before the reader a glimpse of the wonders of the ancient town of Annecy and its lake: the latter being celebrated for its picturesque beauty as much as the Lac du Bourget is distinguished by its wild grandeur.

We had spent the night at Chambéry.

The garçon had marshalled us up the dim, ancient staircase to our respective dormitories, in a sort of torch-light procession. The night had turned chilly, and the wind blew down long corridors, and through cracks and crannies; as if it meant to assure us that, whatever of summer the days possessed, summer nights were as yet blessings of the future.

Left to solitude and my own reflections, I glanced around upon the large, long room, and found no food for thought, no source of companionship, from its dull, desolate walls. I threw open the window and

looked out upon the night. The town seemed quiet enough. The Place was deserted. Immediately in front, the cathedral reared its dark, uninteresting façade. The moon threw her beams upon the ill-paved square: a light so cold and brilliant that by its aid you might count the stones of the thoroughfare. It played at lights and shadows with the sacred edifice, just as it had played for generations long passed away: the moon as young and fresh as ever; the world only growing old and gray.

Now would have been the time for a row on the Lac du Bourget; the time to enjoy the dark, solemn water, and the black depths of the mountains and the sky overhead. No sound but the splash of our own oars to disturb us: even the cry of the wild bird hushed in sleep. I suggested the fancy to H. and M.; who, inspired by the same brilliant idea of looking out upon the world, at that moment opened their window, which happened to be next to mine.

M. shuddered. "It was anything but warm at mid-day," said she. "What, think you, would it be at midnight?"

"But the reward!" I cried, affecting sentiment. "That immense sweep of water reposing under the moonlight; the grandeur of the mountains beneath the same influence; the weird solitude of the abbey, containing, in 'solemn pomp,' the royal dust of centuries. We should float down the pathway of moonshine, enshrined in jewels."

"Better worship at another shrine," said H., who very properly scorns all approach to the weakness of sentimentality; "the shrine of Somnus. We have to be up early in the morning, and you have a hard day's work before you. There goes the hour when evil spirits appear. Let the good ones retire. Bon soir."

Upon which they withdrew, and the window was closed.

The solemn bell vibrated on the air, the last stroke lingering long. The stars kept vigil, attending the Queen of Night. Instinctively there recurred to the memory the reign of another Queen of Night—Ilma di Murska—who as *Astrifiamante*, in the few minutes that she appears upon the stage in that character, electrifies her audience with passages that no one else dare attempt. But she was not here to-night to startle the air with her magic. All was still and silent enough. So still and silent, that the very quietness turned the current of thought into another and very different channel, as memory conjured up the words of that Christmas hymn so many have often listened to at the Temple church—whose services have no rival in the metropolis: that hymn set to those exquisite strains of Mendelssohn by a prince amongst organists, Mr. Hopkins.

It came upon the midnight clear,  
That glorious song of old;  
From angels bending near the earth,  
To touch their harps of gold.

"Peace to the earth, goodwill to men,  
From Heaven's all gracious King!"  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing.

But it was time to follow H.'s advice, and let waking dreams give place to the more restful dreams of sleep.



CASCADE DU GREZY.

Before five o'clock, the great bells of the cathedral clashed out upon the air. The tolling of the small hours had passed unnoticed; but this clash and clamour, this babel and rage of bells, would have awakened the seven sleepers to animation. Had five hours indeed elapsed since there had passed before the mind in a midnight reverie *Ilma di Murska*, and the Temple, and Bishop Heber? It seemed but five minutes.

But there was no mistaking this *réveil-matin*. And H. took care there should be no slumbering again, after the manner of the sluggard. Like a faithful but much dreaded watchman—some of whom still patrol the out-of-the-way villages of Switzerland and Germany; chanting their doleful hymns, and doing no other good than wake up to the weariness of existence unhappy mortals in their blissful first or second sleep—ere the bells had ceased their fury, he looked in upon me and threw open the window. To jump up and close it upon the awful dim was a matter of necessity, involving reason or hearing.

"Qualifying for an inquisitor?" was the natural question.

"Kindly cruel," he coolly replied, ringing for boots and hot water. "You have breakfast to eat; train to catch; an immense amount of work before you. Bah! and you call it pleasure! How glad I am to be returning home! A good lounge, with a book and a paper, in the avenue, is worth all your hunger and thirst for hills and valleys and Roman remains."

"You are infatuated!" I cried: "or a monomaniac; or —"

"Well remarked, but wrongly applied," he returned, laughing. "But here comes your hot water. Make use of it at once, or you will soon find yourself in hot water of a very different description."

Coffee and rolls were ready for us at the appointed moment—what a blessing is that of punctuality!—and the *garçon*, who had been so coolly impudent to the hostess overnight, was now bustling about, all smiles and civility. The remainder of the hotel world, in spite of the roar of bells, still appeared to be sleeping. A true illustration of the proverb that habit is second nature.

So also, sleeping, seemed the outside world; for when before seven o'clock we issued forth, the streets were deserted, the shops closed. Here and there the shutters of a *café* were being taken down by a sleepy *garçon* with heavy eyelids and locks dishevelled, and a countenance the reverse of cheerful; who probably felt no more affection than we ourselves for the summons from the cathedral to be up and doing—and with greater reason. He, poor fellow, awoke to another day of toil and labour; we to one of pleasure.

H.'s train started before ours. He relented not for a moment in his determination to return home; and we saw him safely off. In a spirit of banter he called after us "*bon voyage*," coupled with a hope that we might return at night safe and sound. The train fairly away, a sudden thought occurred, and dismay fell upon us for a moment. H., when joining in our excursions, was paymaster. He had been so in this instance. Were we destitute of funds; and if so, what was to be done?

Hastily and with trepidation we consulted our pockets and purses. Well, with economy we might manage to make both ends meet. But one thing was evident; we must travel second class: no very great

affliction, especially in France. M. landed over to me the contents of her portemonnaie, and I felt that I had a serious responsibility to encounter.

There was still some little time to spare ere the train started, and we sauntered into the park and watched a whole company of soldiers march past with loads of straw upon their backs: and noted the gradually increasing hum and bustle of the town. It was a splendid morning, promise of a hot and glowing day: and we re-entered the station in anticipation of a rare enjoyment. The train came up, and we soon found ourselves steaming away on the high road to Geneva; which branches off for Annecy at Aix-les-Bains.

At Aix we changed trains and had half an hour to wait: an interval well spent in examining the interesting watering place. The season had not yet commenced, and there was an air of repose about it especially refreshing. Here reigned a very different aspect and experience from that of the deserted town of Allevard. The latter looked ruinous and neglected. Old, and badly built, its straggling, narrow streets offered not one point of attraction. At Aix-les-Bains all was a contrast to this, though the town was equally empty. The houses were modern, well and picturesquely built, many standing in their own gardens. The road leading from the station to the town was broad and sunny. Large fashionable-looking hotels reared their heads, enticing visitors to enter their hospitable portals and there take up their abode. The gardens were well planned; the establishment was imposing.

We soon came to the more ancient part of the town, which was particularly clean-looking and well constructed. There was an absence of stiffness about the whole place, an air of openness and freedom, particularly agreeable as a first impression. A few months in the season might be spent here most pleasantly: of that there could not be a doubt. A short walk—not so very short either—brought you to the borders of the Lac du Bourget and its exquisite blue waters, whence you obtained a magnificent panorama of the opposite and more barren shore; its rugged mountains seemingly inaccessible; the white, beautiful building of the Abbey of the Haute-Combe reposing to the right in calm dignity, and looking from hence, as from all other points, a noble receptacle for its Royal dead.

The site of Aix-les-Bains between the mountains, which rise and undulate on all sides, cannot easily be surpassed. How favoured they whose tents are pitched amidst such scenes! How favoured they whose privilege it is to leave their distant homes and make acquaintance with them, though it be but for a season! Heart and mind must for ever after be the better for it. Memory henceforth possesses a rich storehouse of recollections that will serve it in time of need, and in its reveries cast upon the spirit, perhaps worn out with the cares and prosaic realities of every-day life, a glow such as is sometimes

experienced from the conjuring up of some sweet dream long past but not forgotten.

Aix-les-Bains, of course, abounds in excursions. Not the least pleasant of these is that which leads you to the Cascade du Grézy, one of the most romantic spots in the neighbourhood. But associated with this is a very sad story, which you are pretty sure to hear from the guides and boatmen you may chance to meet.

In 1813, Hortense de Beauharnais, the ex-queen of Holland, passed a portion of the season at Aix-les-Bains. Amidst her train, her greatest friend and favourite was the Baronne de Broc, a young, beautiful, and most amiable woman. On the morning of the 10th of June, the queen announced her intention of visiting Annecy, for the purpose



QUAY AND OLD CASTLE, ANNECY.

of spending some hours upon its lake. The baronne besought her rather to make an excursion to the Cascade du Grézy, with whose charms she was most impatient to become acquainted. The queen would not consent, and they started for Annecy.

Upon reaching that portion of the road whence a pathway turns off for the cascade, the royal favourite again renewed her entreaties. The queen, ever gentle and kind, yielded. They would have time to give a glance to the cascade, and then proceed on their way to Annecy.

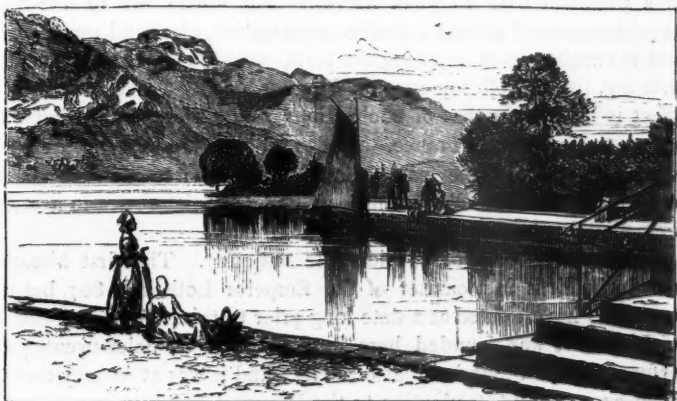
They reached the cascade, and were transfixed with delight at the scene before them. The falling water; the old romantic-looking mill, with its rickety wheel; the wild rocks; the steep, broken precipice. The Baronne de Broc, delighted at having obtained her wish, and being thus rewarded, clapped her hands in ecstasy; and refusing the offer of the miller to pilot her about, separated herself from the others, in order to discover from what point the view was most charming.

Having attained her object, the baronne suddenly stopped on the brink, and raising her hands exclaimed in rapturous tones : "Dieu ! que c'est beau !" At the same moment her foot slipped, and she was precipitated into the chasm. When her body was recovered, life was extinct. The queen was inconsolable, and for very long her health did not recover from the shock it had received. She caused a monument to be erected on the spot, bearing these words :—

"Madame la Baronne de Broc, âgée de 25 ans, a péri sous les yeux de son amie, le 10 Juin, 1813.

"O vous qui visitez ces lieux, n'avancez qu'avec précaution sur ces abîmes : songez à ceux qui vous aiment."

But to return.



LAKE OF ANNECY.

Our half hour at Aix-les-Bains passed all too quickly ; but, remembering our perilous, because almost bankrupt, position, we felt that stern necessity compelled us to hurry on our way. The scene changed, and ere long the train was conveying us towards Annecy.

It was after we had left Aix-les-Bains, and shortly before reaching Annecy, that the greatest beauty, charm, and wonder of the excursion commenced. As soon as the train left St. André—the station next before Annecy—it turned into the midst of one of the finest and grandest mountain torrents it is possible to conceive. Great and high chasms on either side seemed to close in the rushing water, which swept between with tremendous rapidity and force : now dashing in its headlong course down a steep decline, now frothing over rocks and stones, to all which it seemed to bid utter defiance.

Every step of the way opened up a fresh scene. Now the gorge contracted, and the water rushed through it as if by its mighty power it would thrust the rocks asunder. Now it suddenly expanded, and the water dashed foaming onwards, as if rejoicing in its freedom.

Now, as the railroad wound about, it was to be seen on the right hand, now on the left; so that, in order not to lose it, we had frequently to move our seats from one side of the carriage to the other; the torrent rushing, hissing, boiling, like a huge, restless, angry thing of life. The depth here and there was tremendous, and to look down from the height of the chasm over its edge into the setting depths below must have been appalling.

This torrent is called the Fier, and well deserves its name; the pass is called les Gorges du Fier. The whole scene is of almost terrific grandeur and power. A gallery has been constructed with great skill for a considerable distance over the torrent and attached to the rocks, from which a sense of this grandeur and power may be obtained, but at a premium paid to weak nerves. The waters are of the most exquisite emerald green; a perfect aquamarine, clear and transparent; and the angler, upon reaching the level, would find them well stocked with big, lively, frolicsome trout. Whether looking above or below, the effect is constantly that of enchantment: one of the most delightful scenes to be found in France. At length the gorge disappeared, and we came upon a wide extent of water rushing down to swell the torrent, and looking in its shallow stony bed like a miniature sea in a storm. Immediately after, the train stopped at Annecy.

Annecy is a town of considerable antiquity. The first historical mention of it is in a charter of the Emperor Lothair in 867, but it is known to have existed at a date long prior to this. A French Society of Literature was founded here by St. Francis de Sales twenty years before Richelieu founded that of Paris; and it was at Annecy that the Saint wrote his "Introduction to the Devout Life."

The ancient part of the town is irregularly built; the houses, all shapes and sizes, seeming to have been thrown together as chance dictated; possessing no other beauty or attraction than that bestowed upon them by time: an attraction of course in itself considerable. Great arcades stretch half across the streets, dark and gloomy and heavy, reaching up to the first stories, and looking almost like entrances to long black tunnels. The smells would rival those of Cologne; perhaps exceed them; and in threading these old thoroughfares it is difficult to breathe freely. The modern portion of the town is more attractive. Annecy, in many ways, is a place of considerable importance and industry. As many as 6,000 people will assemble there at its Tuesday markets. It also possesses many factories.

But the great charm of Annecy is its lake: one of the most lovely lakes to be found in this part of the world. We went straight to the Hôtel Verdun, to which we had been recommended, and found it everything that could be desired both as to its site and internal arrangements. From its windows on the one side might be seen the quay, with its old bridge, and the steamer lying idly beside it; and beyond

it, on a height, the ancient castle or château of Annecy, looking with its four towers like a miniature Tower of London. From another window we caught a splendid view of the lake and the distant mountains; the waters, in the intensely hot sunshine, looking so calm and blue and cool, that we longed to find ourselves upon its surface.

But time pressed, and our first question of the polite landlady was as to the best means of seeing the beauties of the lake in the short space of two hours. If, madame observed logically, we took a boat, we should be able to view but a small portion of these beauties; whereas a carriage and a good pair of horses would enable us to see the lake to its utmost extent. This clear reasoning reduced the matter to one of necessity and not of choice. We breakfasted at a table whence the lake was visible, alternately feasting upon its beauties, and the dainties of the chef's larder: and in half an hour's time madame's orders had prepared the vehicle, and we found ourselves bowling swiftly by the water's edge.

In every way this lake is a contrast to the Lac du Bourget. There everything was gloomy, desolate and wild; or at least barren. Here the hills and mountains rose up on all sides, far and near, great and small, of the most varied shapes and graceful undulations, clothed with the richest and most luxuriant verdure. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the drive for the next two hours. Here a snow-white cottage reposed amidst its green nest; there a whole village lay in the mountain, the houses rising one above another from the very shores of the lake. At every advancing step the mountains opened up in new forms and changed aspect: now appearing in unbroken undulations, wave after wave of green hill, now separating into different chains, and running up into vales and passes. At the very extremity the mountains rose in massive and curious form; the snow, reposing upon their summits, looking cool and dazzling in the noonday glare.

The waters of the lake added their matchless charm to the scene. On the opposite side, the mountains and small villages were reflected upon its calm surface. The bright blue of the sky was thrown in deeper shade upon it. Here and there a swan made its graceful progress, and in places a miniature island threw its cool reflection around. Nothing more beautiful and brilliant could be imagined. The Lac du Bourget had impressed us by its solitude, its desolate aspect: with the Lac d'Annecy we were enchanted.

The drive and the short stay to which we were limited but caused an intense longing for a more familiar acquaintance. During the season a small steamboat plies the lake, which must be an acquisition to the place; for delightful as the drive is, the whole panorama as seen from the waters must be yet more remarkable. Rousseau stayed here several times; and some distance down the lake stands a small house called *la Tour*, long inhabited by Eugène Sue. There are many spots

of interest to visit on the borders of the lake, and numerous Roman remains. Of the latter the whole neighbourhood bears many traces.

On our way back to the station we drove through some of the ancient parts of the town, and noted many curious features, of which a hasty glimpse could give us but a rapid, though strong and lasting, impression. An impression which caused us to register a resolve that, all being well, we would some day return for a longer sojourn.

Our day had been intensely charming and delightful ; the scenery we had passed through beautiful beyond expression. The experiences of yesterday almost sank into poverty beside those of to-day ; and we proceeded on our long railway journey full of thoughts and raptures to which it was difficult to give utterance.



ANNECY.

The more man sees of all the marvellous beauties of our earth, the more he must wonder what Paradise could have been ; for these spots are earthly paradises, greater beauty than which can scarcely be conceived. The more intimate the acquaintance with them, the more fervently will the heart exclaim : "How wonderful are Thy works, O Lord ! Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory !"

If then this earth, the abode of fallen man, is a reflection of such majesty and beauty as at times will take away all speech and power of expression : what, we may indeed ask, will be the revelation of that country whose shores are washed by the river with its waters clear as crystal, whose banks are overshadowed by the leaves of the Tree of Life ?

Our mortal and finite natures possess as much beauty around them as they can bear. The body is yet unable to endure beyond a certain point : just as the children of Israel had to hide their faces from the brightness of Moses' countenance when he came down

from the mountain. But the more we see of the beauty and power, the majesty and grandeur, of the handiwork of God in the objects of His creation, the more are we able to realize a foretaste of those joys which shall be: the more intensely will the soul long at times to escape from the thralldom of this present life, and fly away to that eternal shore where such joys shall be unfading.

CHARLES W. WOOD.



OLD STREET IN ANNECY.



### SPRING VOICES.

Hark ! the April winds are ringing  
In the woods their joyous chime,  
Practising sweet strains to welcome  
Back the summer's golden prime.

In the garden, in the meadow,  
On the mountain, by the lake,  
Freed from winter's ice-bound slumber,  
Thousand tiny blossoms wake.

Tender azure, deep-dyed crimson  
Bright as morning's richest glow,  
Regal gold, imperial purple;  
Such the varied tints they show.

Well may fancy's eye discover  
In each gaily painted flower

Palace meet for Elfin sovereign ;  
Or some fairy's silken bower.

But the Christian on them gazing,  
There far deeper thoughts may find ;  
Thoughts, of Eden's groves that whisper,  
And the morning of mankind.

Even now their sweet-toned music  
Comes like distant bells at night,  
Saying, Flowers are angels' footprints,  
Relics of the hours of light

When with clear seraphic voices  
Rang earth's yet untrodden ways,  
Teaching all the young creation  
How to hymn its Father's praise.

ALICE KING.

## A "CASE" OF MINE.

THE subject of "Memory" having been much discussed lately, in connection with a celebrated trial, I propose placing before my readers a case that I had under my own ken and care for some time, that may be interesting as an illustration of "Imperfect Memory" versus "Imperfect Knowledge."

I was one day called upon to visit professionally a lady residing not far from my own house in Bloomsbury; the malady some common ailment, influenza or feverish cold, but accompanied by unusual nervous depression. I found my patient a woman about thirty or thirty-two years of age; of nervous temperament and rather constrained manner. A half suspicious, restless look in her eyes made me notice her more particularly than I otherwise might have done, and when I left the room the impression that I received was that she was a woman with a "story."

She was dressed in deep mourning, which made me remark to her sister, who was taking a few instructions from me concerning my treatment: "She has sustained a loss I see, and the nervous depression attendant on that has lowered the vital energies; thus an otherwise slight cold has fastened itself rather tightly on her."

"Yes," returned her sister; "she has indeed gone through much lately. Perhaps, as her doctor, you ought to be told more fully the details of her case; and, indeed, they may interest you from another point of view."

We sat down, and I will condense her narrative as far as possible.

My patient, Mrs. Hammond, and her husband were returning to England from the West Indies, where the latter had some property, when one of those unfortunate collisions between ships occurred, which, though, unhappily, so frequent of late, were then rare. The collision took place in very rough weather: a high sea, and a boisterous, fitful wind.

A few were saved, among them Mrs. Hammond; but her husband was never seen again. Her baby, only six months old, was washed away. I did not attend very much to the particulars of the shipwreck, and all I can be certain of is that Mrs. Hammond, husbandless and childless, penniless and unconscious, was, with a few others, saved on that fearful night in one of the ship's boats, and taken on board by another homeward bound vessel of some sort that came to them soon after the calamity. Her husband's family were well off, and when the ship reached England, she proceeded to their house in

London. It was at the residence of her father-in-law that I had now seen the poor lady, just a year and a half after her bereavement.

"But the strange thing is this," continued my companion, "that she does not fret the least for the child, because all memory of having had one is gone! When returning to consciousness we are told that she cried piteously for her husband—but no one expression ever escaped her lips about the baby, and when naturally we condoled with her on its loss, she looked at us as if *we* had taken leave of our senses!"

"Perhaps it is God's mercy," I said, reverently. "The double grief might have upset her reason."

"But has it not already?" asked her sister. "She has as utterly forgotten the baby's having existed as if—well, as if in fact it never had!"

"Are you sure she has *really* forgotten it?" I questioned.

"Oh, certainly. She was never particularly fond of children. She was brought up by an aunt, separate from me and my brother Frank, very much to herself, and never took to children even of her own age. She used to say she hoped she never would have any, but when baby came, then," laughed Miss Dennis, "she made as great a fuss over it as anyone; at least, so I heard, for it was born in Jamaica."

"The child was certainly drowned?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. Out of seven little ones on board, only one was saved; the child of a poor steerage woman, who was taken back by the culprit steamer. Although we sometimes endeavour to rake up old memories to her mind, we do not try her too much. What would you advise?"

"Leaving her with her own sorrow, unconscious of her other loss," I answered. "If the truth ever dawns upon her, she will the better bear up against its consequent grief, the more strength of mind and body can be garnered up *now*. Keep her up in every way; cheerful looks about her, and plenty of light nourishing food."

"It is not *madness*, is it, doctor?" said poor Miss Dennis, looking me searchingly in the face.

"By no means; merely a case of suspended memory. The veil may be lifted any moment, though we could hardly wish for it." And to myself I said, "How many of us would *pray* that such a veil might fall upon our past!"

Her cold took its usual course, unattended by any worse symptom than ordinary, except for the natural depression consequent upon her peculiar circumstances. Two or three times I led the way cautiously to the subject we were interested in; I mean her sister and myself; but the suspicious, restless look in her eyes became so intense that I desisted, quite aware that she would be far more likely to think *us* insane than I could think her to be so.

In two or three weeks' time, I discontinued my attendance, with the

full understanding between her sister and myself that if any material change took place in her mental condition I should be made aware of it. Almost a year passed by without my hearing any more of her, when one afternoon, just as I had finished a hasty lunch, preparatory to going my afternoon "round," I received a note from Miss Dennis, saying how grateful she would be to me if I could look in upon her that afternoon. At three o'clock I was at their house, and found myself once more tête-à-tête with Miss Dennis.

"We agreed," she commenced, "that I should let you know anything special concerning your old patient, and I have really something very odd to tell you. About six months ago there was some little hitch in my sister's money affairs—you know her husband had some property in Jamaica, and it was considered advisable that some one should go out and see after the estate, which had been entrusted to careless hands on my poor brother-in-law's death. The money had been coming in very irregularly, so our brother Frank, who has lived in the north of England for the last seven years, volunteered to go and look up matters for her. He has not been well for some time, and his doctor said a sea voyage would be just the very thing for him. The long and the short of it is, that yesterday the mail arrived with letters from him for us both. He hopes, he says, to make everything straight very soon; found affairs in a great muddle, and believes the agent anything but trustworthy. In his letter to me was another enclosure marked 'Private.' This I took into my own room and read. The best way, doctor, is for you to read it yourself; it will not take you long."

Miss Dennis handed me the letter, of which the substance was as follows:—

"In one of my many rambles before the sun is well up, I was walking along a path near Kingston, when I came upon a woman with two children sitting by the roadside. The eldest was playing with little red berries, and seemed between two and three years old; the other, quite a baby. I should not have noticed them much but that the mother spoke crossly to the eldest as I passed, which caused me to look at him. As I did so, I was staggered to see what at the first glance seemed the image of Mary. Then the resemblance resolved itself into a still stronger likeness to poor Edward; not in the features, perhaps, but as he lifted his eyes to mine, the same half melancholy expression looked out from them. There was not the slightest likeness to the woman in him. I stopped in my walk and got into conversation with her, and as I did so the little fellow quietly put his hand in mine, as if we had been old acquaintances. She noticed it by saying, 'Well! that is a wonder! he hardly ever takes to anyone—little shy monkey!' The words were said playfully, but the *tone* was hardly motherly, I thought.

"I questioned her about different things, and as we talked the wind

got much fresher, and the morning betokened a rough day. I made a remark on the change in the weather.

"It will be a stormy day, I fear," she said; "and it is so stupid of me, but ever since the shipwreck that I was in, I get quite upset when the wind blows high—it makes me shudder!"

"This remark naturally sharpened my wits, and I got from her the following particulars.

"She was going to England with her husband and baby, when, within a few days of arrival, the ship struck; a great many were washed overboard and never seen again. She and her husband and baby were in the water some time, and she and the baby were ultimately saved, though not together. She had given up both her treasures as lost, and had sunk into a kind of swoon, when a sailor placed the little thing dripping in her arms. 'My joy was great,' she said simply; 'and when all hope was gone of my husband being saved, I turned to the little wet bundle in my arms for comfort, and I believe the necessity for giving it food saved my life. With some others I decided to go back again in the other ship that offered to take us. What could I do without my husband in a strange land? So I never saw England, sir, and I came back without money, clothes, husband or child.'

"Or child!" I repeated after her.

"Yes, sir. It was not my child!" Here she burst into tears. "It was not my own dear baby, but another! I found it out soon, but for many hours I nursed it as my own, for I lay in a sort of stupor, hardly noticing anything that occurred around me, and then, sir, what could I do but keep it? It was fatherless and motherless, as I was husbandless and childless, and so, sir, I have kept him ever since—this little one!" She touched the boy's forehead as she spoke.

"How did you find out he was not yours?" I asked, with a strange fluttering hope at my heart.

"By his clothes first, sir. You see, the collision happening in the night, there were hardly any of us dressed. He had only his little night-shirt on, that he had been snatched up in, and when given to me was wrapped in something thick and warm by the good sailor; so it was not till I roused a little, as some kind ladies offered me some of their own babies' clothing for him, that I found his shirt was fine and delicate—and my boy's was poor and coarse. It startled me at once and roused me up like a shock, and when I gazed eagerly into his eyes I saw he was not my own! My boy put out his little arms and chubby fingers, and crowed in my face—this one drank of my milk, and never cooed or chirped to thank me!"

"The tears were coming fast to her eyes. I pressed the little delicate hand firmer to mine, as the child looked up wonderingly to his foster-mother's face.

"Were the clothes marked?" I asked.

" 'Yes, sir ; there was E. H. on the shirt, and I've always kept it by me safely.'

"Now, my dear sister, does not your opinion coincide with mine, that the child is our poor sister's lost darling ?

"I saw the likeness to both parents at once ; the shirt is marked with the initials that would have been on it (I bring the shirt with me), saved in the collision. In fact, everything points, in my opinion, to the same conclusion ; and though I may get a scolding from my little wife at home, I have acted to my firm belief. I told the woman our story and fully convinced her. Indeed, she did not need much inducement to give the little fellow up. She had a certain feeling for him, she said, as having nursed him, but 'I have never quite got over the turn he gave me when I saw he was not my own. God forgive me !' she continued. 'I have tried to do my best for him. Last year I married again, sir, and have another dear little one now. My husband never took to Clyde (I called him after the ship, sir), but to please me he remains with us, and shares the little we have : but I don't think he'd fret at all at leaving us ; he never took to us any more than my husband to him.'

"I saw her husband the next day, and with a small sum of money I got him to resign his paternal charge over the boy with great alacrity. Mrs. L——, the consul's wife, has kindly undertaken to fit him out respectably, and next week, if all goes well, I hope to start for England with my—as I firmly believe—long-lost nephew. But what I am to do with him when there I don't know. It's a queer business to force a child on a woman who says she never had one. Surely she'd say (and with seeming truth) that 'she ought to know best !' But, as I believe Providence ordered my steps here to recover the poor little fellow, I will trust the same good Providence to restore him to his natural protectors. If not, why it makes only one more mouth to feed. He is just Bobby's age within a week or two ; they will be capital playfellows."

Here the letter entered upon other matters.

"And, now," said Miss Dennis, looking at me steadily with her large earnest eyes, "what are we to do ?"

"When does your brother return ?" I asked.

"He is on his way now. In three weeks, please God, he will be at home. To think of her little darling being alive and restored to her, and she not aware of his existence—or his ever having existed ! It would be almost laughable, were it not so sad. How would you advise us to act ?"

"I must consider," mused I. "We must be cautious. With a nervous temperament such as hers, a shock, even of joy, would be a great pain ; and if the memory returns it might be with such a rush as to overthrow reason itself." After a few moments' silence, I proposed the following plan.

"They must meet in the ordinary course of circumstances ; at least, it must seem so to her. She knows, of course, of her brother's having gone to Jamaica?"

"Oh, yes, and takes an interest in all the arrangements ; often talks about him and the old places he will visit ; is quite cheerful when we mention his returning soon, and paying us a visit of a week or two, after he has run down to see his wife and family. Indeed, she said it might enliven me, if he could bring one of his children with him."

"She has never seen Master Bobby, whom your brother speaks of as being about the same age as her own?"

"Never."

"I have it!" I exclaimed. "Introduce Master Clyde as Master Bobby, and see if any particular effect will be made upon her. Let your brother come as expected, and bring the boy with him. Is there a girl anywhere?"

"Yes, the eldest, Mary ; named after herself."

The long and the short of it is this, that I advised the bringing up his little girl, Mary, and his supposed nephew, Clyde, whose real name, if indeed he was his nephew, was Edward ; and let the mother and child be brought together as events would naturally occur. "And let me know," I concluded, "as soon as you can, if anything comes of our little stratagem."

I must now put another letter before my reader, for what followed will be better understood from Miss Dennis' narrative than from words of mine.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—As I have now really something to relate to you, I will write you my promised letter. I must just tell you that, for some days before Frank returned, Mary had seemed very uneasy in her mind ; restless and fitful ; complained of bad nights, and strange dreams ; but on the day that Frank was expected and came, she was much calmer and herself again. She flew to meet him, and the servants taking forcible possession of the children at a previous hint of mine, we had some minutes in the drawing-room before they were brought in.

"On their arrival, Frank said, 'Your little namesake, Mary, and Master Bobby.'

"As her eyes fell on the boy, I saw her start. My heart beat fearfully.

"'So this is Bobby, is it?' she said, and just laid her hand on his head. 'He is like—not you,' and she looked fixedly at Frank ; 'nor your wife'—here she paused, and turning away passed her hand across her brow. Frank signed to me to take the children out of the room ; which I did ; left them with the nurse, and returned. Mary had walked to the window, and for a few seconds we took no notice of her, but conversed on different subjects. Then I turned to her and said, 'I'll

leave you two together, Mary. There's lots of business to talk over, and I'll go and look after the chicks.'

"She turned round, and one would have thought she had aged ten years in those few moments. She had a pained and wearied look, and her thoughts seemed far away as she answered, 'Do, Ellen—and keep them quiet—and get Bobby—Bobby!' she repeated, 'who is he like?—I don't think I can be well, I feel so strange.' And she turned back again to the window and looked out.

"I confess I thought of sending at once for you, she had such a wild, oppressed look on her face. She was close to us, and yet one felt that she herself was very far away. I feared we had done wrong in testing her in this manner, and might kill her reason if we ventured further. I wished at the moment the boy had never been found, and went out of the room quite savagely. I remembered what you said about letting things come naturally, so we did not have the children in again, or even mention them, until a bright young laugh rang in our ears from the floor above, where a temporary nursery had been arranged.

"'They seem making themselves quite at home, Miss Polly, at any rate,' said my brother. 'I'll go and see the fun.' Mary had been unusually quiet. The business matters that had to be discussed seemed for the time to have lost their importance; she would break off in the middle of a sentence, the strange look come over her again, and her hand would be passed across her forehead and eyes. When Frank had gone she remarked, faintly, 'Bobby was not laughing—it was the girl's laugh.'

"How did she know? She then left the room, and I went to dress for dinner. Frank tells me that on going upstairs he found Polly in a state of glee. Nurse was remonstrating as she wiped a saucer, and Master Edward sitting utterly disconsolate in a very big arm-chair, with two big tears coursing quietly down his cheeks. At her papa's entrance, Polly rushed to him. 'Oh papa! isn't he a funny boy? He's crying because nurse won't let him go and see Auntie Mary again! He says he wants to go to the lady, and stole away outside—nearly all the way down; and nurse had to carry him back, and then he cried again! Isn't he a funny boy, papa?'

"Frank quieted Polly with a look, and comforted Edward by saying that he would soon see the lady again if he was a good boy. He gulped down his tears, and Frank left him. The nurse was in the secret, and looked to me for orders in the matter. On the chance of Mary's visiting the room, we had left out on the table the little night-shirt the baby had on when the poor woman discovered, on her recovery, that he was not her own child. It was thrown carelessly on the table, with a few odds and ends and toys. She would think it was the workmanship of the nurse for the benefit of another little addition that Frank is daily expecting in his family.

"After I was dressed, I ran upstairs to have another look at the young ones, and met Mary just outside the door on the point of entering. She blushed red when she saw me. 'Come along, Mary,' I said, entering first and taking her hand. 'We'll have a romp before dinner—it will give us an appetite.'

"Edward was standing at the window. Polly was nursing a doll and finishing what had once been a large slice of cake. Strange to say, Mary spoke to Polly and not to 'Bobby,' though it was evident it was 'Bobby' she had come to see, for her eyes wandered to him, and rested with a puzzled look upon his face. She stood by the little table, and soon I saw her fingers take up the shirt. She turned and twisted it about for some time before she looked at it, then said, 'You have plenty to do now, I suppose, nurse; another little one expected.' 'Oh, yes, ma'am—the more the merrier, bless their little hearts.' She talked a deal more of nurse talk, but Mary's eyes were now on the shirt, and I saw her give a sort of shiver. I signed to nurse to go away with Polly. She did so, and still Mary only fingered the little shirt in a nervous sort of way. I stole to her side, and as she turned her look frightened me. 'Take that child away, Milly, take him away instantly!—I can't breathe the air near him! it stifles me!'

"'Hush Mary!' I said. 'You are not well, that is all. We will go away, not poor Bobby.' I got her downstairs, and prevailed on her to lie down. There seemed a struggle, a great struggle, going on within her, and so strong was the mastery she had to keep over herself that I saw she could hardly help thrusting me away from her in her efforts to throw off something that seemed forcing itself on her. Was it the memory returning, I thought—and prayed silently to God to aid it. She did not refer again to the boy, but her mental agony continued, and it was quite two hours before I could leave her. When, after at length prevailing on her to take a little food, she sank asleep, I stole thankfully away.

"Nurse was awaiting me. 'I can't keep the child quiet, miss. He keeps saying he wants to go to the lady. I don't know what to do with him, but I know not a bit of rest I shall get this blessed night.'

"'Get him interested in some little story, nurse, and keep them both quiet, for Mrs. Hammond has gone to sleep. I am tired myself, and will go and lie down.'—And what we had been so anxious to accomplish came about quite naturally, in this wise.

"An hour later, I got up from the sofa and stole to my sister's room. I found the door ajar, and on looking in, there was little Edward sitting very gravely by her bedside, one small hand on the coverlet. It was touchingly beautiful to see the little child sitting patiently waiting for its mother to awaken—awaken to memory, memory of love and of him. I could hardly move—I felt spell-bound. He never stirred, but his large blue eyes rested alternately on her face and on mine, and his tiny

hand crept closer to hers, but never ventured to touch it for fear of awakening her, while on his face rested the half sad, wondering expression so like his father's. I saw it was best as it was. God had doubtless brought him at the right time. He had taken away—He was about to restore, and He knew the way better than I.

"For half an hour we watched, when a slight movement told us that she had awakened. Still she did not open her eyes, but moved about restlessly, and sighed as if waking from a dream. I stole behind a screen, that *he* might be the first object she saw.

"She began speaking to herself—a habit of hers.

"It is so strange! Dream upon dream—dream upon dream!—and when I open my eyes I almost expect to see the child before me, that in my sleep hangs round my neck till my blood warms at his touch!' She added, wearily, 'I think I must be going mad.' Still her eyes were closed, and she seemed to be gently dozing off again, when the child quietly touched her hand, and in a voice of subdued ecstasy burst out, 'I want you for my mamma!' The eyes opened and rested on him—they seemed to grow larger and larger—she raised herself, and the boy, with his overflowing childish love, flung himself sobbing on the bed!

"For a moment she was stupefied, and passed her hand again across her brow. It was but for a moment: the veil was raised, the mist cleared, and the sunshine of the pent-up mother-love overflowed with a loud cry—'My child! my boy!'"

So ended the letter.

I indeed went to see them as soon as I could, and a joyful household I found. Mother and boy were inseparable—the long fast of the affections made them ravenous of love.

In this case the child's instinct seemed to lead him to his mother as much as her instinct led her to him, but by what link the chain of memory was united we cannot conceive. He who constituted the brain and mind, as well as the heart and emotions, only knows—but so it was. They found conclusive evidence afterwards of young "Clyde" being indeed her son; and when once the memory was whole again, various circumstances came to her mind to substantiate the woman's tale, without even the aid of the identity of the night-shirt with that of her child.

I told Mrs. Hammond and Miss Dennis that with their permission I would certainly write their strange story in my book of "Remarkable Cases."

You, reader, must judge whether it be one or no.

## "COME AND TEACH US."

By ANNE BEALE.

"COME and teach us!" These words were uttered entreatingly, and reiterated, a few weeks ago, by children assembled in the great Board School of Tower Street, Seven Dials, which was opened in March, 1875, on the Sabbath, for religious instruction.

Before describing the young suppliants, let us glance at the locality on a week day. The large, commodious, ornamental school-house rises in the heart of one of the poorest neighbourhoods of this mighty city. We were told that it was built on the site of a rookery wherein swarmed thieves and evil people of all descriptions. We judge, indeed, of the dwellings that were, by those that are.

Opposite the majestic building is a row of black, ill-looking houses, in front of which old furniture stands exposed for sale. The street, if street it may be called, is one of those leading out of Seven Dials, and into an intricate labyrinth of streets, courts, and alleys.

Standing at its entrance, we face the one remaining Dial of the seven that gave its name to this curious septagonal enclosure, and we glance at six other streets leading diverse ways, two of which are St. Andrew's Street and Bird Fair. They are comparatively empty, and there is space to examine them and their wares. Although the population of these parts is said to be improved and improving, it is still poor, wretched, and degraded. We see miserable, depressed-looking people, turn where we will, and it is almost a relief to look away from humanity, and, entering Bird Fair, to glance at the thousands of cages that line the thoroughfare, both within and without the houses. All sorts of birds are confined within the wire and wicker-work, fretting out their lives, deprived of air and light. Here are larks and linnets, blackbirds and thrushes, pigeons and barn-door fowl, bullfinches and canaries, piled one upon another so thickly that you cannot see where the cages begin and end. A meagre-looking, thinly-clad woman is giving water through the grating to some pigeons, which are just able to poke their bills into the basin. They look fat and smooth, and sip daintily, and, their purveyor assures us, require to drink only twice a day. In this spot many a London sparrow is sold for a linnet, and birdcatchers haunt the suburb to entrap them; or they are even painted into canaries, and we tremble as we think of the trustful little birds that peck at our window-sill during the hard frost and frozen snow. In the midst of this street of live birds, is what is called a "stuffing shop;" so that, if the feathered creatures chance to die, they may still

be turned to account. Here they appear to hop airily on twigs, or to sit maternally on nests, in the midst of a grotesque and grim gathering of "dry bones;" and when we see two human skulls, a black and white one, grinning at us through the window, we hurry back to Tower Street, in order to pursue our investigation of the surroundings of its Board School.

On the side of the building opposite Seven Dials is Lumber Court. It is well named, for every window displays furniture and curiosities: so old and queer that we wonder if anyone could be found to buy them. Impelled by curiosity we wander on, and we find ourselves, to our surprise, in a neat, well-built street, with brightish houses and clean windows; literally an oasis in a desert; for our next venture brings us to an alley where wretched women loll out of broken windows, and where we are told to walk in the middle of the way, lest we be robbed or insulted; where black men pop up from the cellars, half-skinned rabbits hang from the walls, and poles are protruded from the garret windows, whereon clothes are hung out to dry. And so, on and on, through notorious St. Giles's, where poverty and vice ask for Christian help and Christian teaching.

During six days of the week, nearly a thousand of the children of these crowded haunts are at least well-housed, well-taught, and well-disciplined in Tower Street Board School; and it is well to know that forty minutes are allowed each morning for religious instruction. On the seventh, it is still more important that the school-house doors shall be open to teach the young of Him who ordered His people "to keep holy the Sabbath Day." As it is, they see God's commandment broken from morning to night. The first thing that greets their eyes on the Sunday morning is the open-air market. St. Andrew's Street becomes a dense mass of human beings, who buy and sell meat, fish, and vegetables, for the Sunday dinner. Let those who would learn what humanity can be reduced to by poverty, crime, and, before all, by drink, visit this spot on a Sunday morning, and they must needs become missionaries either to soul or body. When they have watched the anxious, striving, starving multitude—a small portion of the population of the largest, richest, noblest city in the world—let them proceed to their Board School, and aid in teaching the young "to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

It was a Sunday evening in December when we visited the school. As we went from gas-lighted streets to gas-lighted house it seemed warmer and more cheerful by night than by day. We no longer wondered that the children throng the thoroughfares; in summer for air, in winter for light. Neither did we wonder at the noisy groups we encountered on the broad stone staircase of the noble school-house.

At the top of the first flight of steps we were greeted by the words,

"Tell that man in there to let us in." It was strange to hear such an appeal in a Sunday-school, more ragged than reputable; but we found afterwards that "That man" had already more obstreperous urchins than he could manage single-handed. He occupied one of the smaller class-rooms, which was furnished with boys enough for at least half a dozen teachers. He stood in front of them with his Bible in his hand, striving to maintain order and gain attention. But they had not much idea either of quietude or obedience, and our presence rather increased than diminished their excitability.

"Of course you are always well behaved in the presence of ladies," we hazarded.

"Yes, ma'am; yes, ma'am. Look at them big black beads," was the answer, in allusion to an unfortunate jet bracelet.

Our companion, who understood them better than their young teacher, seized the noisiest by the collar, and put him out of the room, saying, in answer to our call for quarter, "We shall soon have him crying to come back."

There was a temporary lull, during which the teacher said, "What is one among so many? If only they would come and help us!"

Here lay the difficulty. Volunteers are few.

We again found only one teacher in another of the lesser class-rooms, where seventy infants were assembled, varying in age, apparently, from two or three to seven or eight. But this lady maintained a marvellous decorum amongst her tiny boys and girls. She walked up and down before them, now vigorously calling them by name; now preserving order by a wave of the hand, and always receiving a "Yes, miss," in return. It was wonderful how well she remembered their names, and how she could have acquired them during that one short evening hour.

It may, perhaps, be allowable to write that the loving and self-sacrificing teacher, who has evidently won not only the attention, but the affection of these little ones, passes her week in the Soho Bazaar, and thus devotes her only leisure hours to the blessed work for which she seems singularly adapted. Will no one come and help her?

The two principal class-rooms were better, though not sufficiently furnished with teachers. That on the first floor was appropriated to the girls, the second floor to the boys; spacious, lofty, airy, well-lighted rooms. There were in all one hundred and thirty-two boys, one hundred and twenty-one girls, and seventy-one infants, on the evening of which we write. If teachers would volunteer, the three stories, which would receive nine hundred children, might be filled. As it is, they are insufficient for the three hundred and twenty-four assembled. We were struck by this, as we wandered from class to class, inquisitive ourselves and exciting curiosity. Surrounding one of the horseshoe-shaped class-desks were some fifteen boys, with no teacher in their midst. They were mostly tidy and clean-faced, and, though small of stature,

were, they said, all variously employed in the shops and manufactories of the locality. They were clamorous in giving information, all shouting out at once their trades, ages, and parentage. Nor were they quite deficient in religious knowledge, which they were equally willing to impart. In reply to a few casual questions, these and similar answers were given, so eagerly that it was apparent how ready the speakers were to learn the way of eternal life. "God will make us good if we pray to Him." "He can hear us well enough." "If we are good we shall go to heaven." "What sort of life did Jesus Christ live? Why mis'able!" "No; a very good life. He come to save us."

Their ideas of our Lord seemed to arise from their own feelings, and the boy who used the word "mis'able," looked particularly small and wan. Their eagerness was affecting, while in their midst; the words that followed us, as we wandered off to other classes, went to the heart. They rose simultaneously, and with extended hands cried out:

"Teacher! teacher! Don't go away! Come back and teach us! Come and teach us!"

Pausing before another class, we heard a complaint concerning unwashed hands. "Please, teacher, I swep' a chimley this morning," pleaded the culprit. "I wash 'em and my face with soap. Wouldn't come clean nohow."

Immediately a dozen pairs of small brown-black hands were protruded, and a dozen voices exclaimed, "And I wash mine, teacher; and I—and I—. But we works in Nixon's black-lead works, and they wont come white." That the effort had been made was apparent, for the pinkest and smoothest of nails gleamed like shells at the points of the little dark fingers. And very thin and delicate those fingers were for boys, some of whom were thirteen or fourteen years old, though looking eleven.

We were not surprised that the children should like to come to the cheerful, bright school from their cheerless homes. Gas blazed everywhere, and large coloured prints and maps adorned the walls. There were Scripture pictures, prints of animals, scientific drawings, and all to be enjoyed without coercion. It is the obligation, not the learning, that makes the board school unpopular; but doubtless this will wear away as its advantages become appreciated. And if it is opened, as in the present instance, on the Sunday for religious teaching also, those advantages will be trebled. But it is an expensive experiment, and costs nearly £150 per annum, the rent alone being £97 10s. Of course money is needed as well as teachers.

Those who have made the experiment invite Christians of all denominations to aid them. Churchman or Nonconformist will find enough to do, independently of sectarian differences. At present there are only twenty-seven teachers, most of whom are engaged in business during the week, and who find it difficult, after their six days' labour, to

teach twice on the seventh day. There are many unencumbered by trade, who express themselves anxious to devote a part of their time to God's service. They could scarcely do so more efficiently or please Him better than by helping to bring these stray lambs into the great Shepherd's fold.

It appears that young people who have been taught in ragged schools frequently make good teachers to children ragged as they once were. Several such, who owe, under God, a respectable position in life to lessons learnt in Gray's Yard Ragged School, sometimes come to Tower Street, and there earnestly and successfully impart what they have learnt under similar circumstances. And Tower Street, although not professedly a ragged school, but a Sunday school, has many a ragged child. One little girl looked especially pitiful, as she sat hatless, unkempt, and half clothed, patiently listening. She had had no tea, she said, as her companions gathered round her, with that instinctive feeling that impels the poor to help those still poorer. One such little starveling, who was at the school the previous Sunday, had been, during the week, convicted of stealing a pair of boots, and sent to a reformatory. Such an instance should suffice to rouse the sympathies of the rich and educated towards instilling principles of religion and morality into these young souls, who only consider detected crime criminal. And it would seem that the opening of these great board schools on the Sunday, for the special purpose of religious teaching, must be one means to this great end.



#### THE SNOWDROP.

SWEET harbinger of Spring, that blossoms here  
The fairest flower in Nature's sombre dress,  
Uplifting now thy pure white loveliness  
Above the barren mould,—thou dost appear  
Like messenger from some diviner sphere :  
A subtle charm is thine to soothe and bless ;  
When all around is drear and comfortless  
Thou comest with the early, opening year.  
Emblem of consolation ! In thy grace  
And perfect beauty, blooming to adorn  
Our cheerless paths till sunny seasons dawn—  
As Love, which finds on earth a resting place,  
Nor fears the cold and bitter world to face,  
Shall brighten lives that fate hath left forlorn !

## STRONGER THAN LOVE.

## I.

ONE autumn evening in the year 1812, a gay party of young people had assembled in the library of Monsieur Delapierre's Alsatian château. The house, charmingly situated on the slope of a wooded hill, once belonged to a noble family, the last scion of which perished in the Revolution. The building had consequently been left to decay, till Monsieur Delapierre, a wealthy financier, purchased the estate and restored the mansion.

Most of the rooms were newly decorated and furnished in the questionable taste of the Empire; but either the new proprietor or the architect he had employed preferred leaving the library intact, as it had been found in good preservation. The ceiling, therefore, still displayed, amidst its elaborate embellishments, the heraldic devices of the previous possessors. Massive book-cases of richly carved oak alternated with pedestals supporting busts of renowned Frenchmen; and, in the spaces above, paintings in fresco illustrated some passages in the life of the celebrity whose marble effigy graced the corresponding pedestal. Two innovations had been made, however. French windows now opened on to a broad terrace; and in the place of honour at the head of the room stood a bust of Napoleon, the fresco above representing Victory descending with a laurel wreath.

The young people had been sailing on the river, the silver windings of which were visible in the depths of the valley. Now they were scattered in groups about the room, as inclination drew them together. At one of the windows stood several girls, amusing themselves with weaving garlands of flowers which they had brought in from the garden.

"Are you weaving a wreath, Julie?" asked Eugène Delapierre as he joined them. "Who is the happy person for whose brow it is destined?"

"If I weave a wreath, it shall be for the greatest and best," answered the fair, bright-eyed Alsatian girl, looking up from her employment, a smile upon her lips.

"And whom amongst these do you deem the greatest and best?" said Eugène, glancing round at the busts that decorated the room.

Julie paused a moment, her wreath in her hand. Then she advanced towards Rousard, and placed the flowers on the sculptured brow. "Honour to him who in his song honoured woman," she said.

"Brava!" cried those assembled, in chorus.

"And you, Elise, what do you say?"

"Honour to the best," replied Elise, in a lower tone. "My wreath is not of roses but of marguerites, and it must rest upon the pure and holy."

Stepping forwards, with a low reverence she placed it upon the head of Fénélon.

"Now, Lucienne, it is your turn!" exclaimed Julie.

"Can you ask me my choice?" replied the lovely daughter of the house. "But my wreath must not be of fading flowers, but of the immortal bay."

So saying, she hastily plucked a few sprigs from the bay tree that grew on the terrace outside, and, twining them together, crowned the Emperor's bust with the shining green leaves. Her breast heaved, her eyes flashed, as the cry passed round, "Vive Napoleon! Vive l'Empereur!" One only remained silent. As Lucienne observed his grave and troubled countenance, she crossed the room to where he stood somewhat apart from the rest.

"What say you, Waldemar?" she asked. "Have you no greeting for our great hero?"

"You forget, Lucienne," he returned. "To me he can only appear in the light of the oppressor of my country."

"Ah, you do not love France!" she cried, her cheeks flushing, her lips quivering.

"Not love France? When France holds what is dearest to me in the world?" replied the youth. "But Napoleon is not France. Trust me, Lucienne, the time will come when France will find the idol she has set up is only a false god—a destroyer, not a regenerator, as you would believe."

"I will not hear you!" Lucienne exclaimed passionately. "If you really loved me, you would honour what I honour, and hate what I hate! But I am not first in your heart."

"Dearest, listen," said Waldemar Steinthal, taking her hand in both his. "I should not be worthy of you, should not dare to claim a place in your warm heart, did I not love my country and feel for my country's disgrace. When the forester had stricken down the fawn that now follows you so faithfully, did I not watch you binding its wound with these tender little hands? My fatherland lies bleeding, wounded by the mighty hunter, and shall I not at any rate lament over it, if I cannot help to save?"

Lucienne stood for a moment thoughtful. "Waldemar," she said at last; "you would fight against France, then, if the opportunity served? Fight against my country, and lose me."

"Lose you, Lucienne?" Waldemar questioned in sorrowful accents.

"Yes. It would have to be so," the girl replied. "I would never marry the enemy of France."

At this moment a large black retriever, that had stolen into the room through the open windows, came up to Steinthal, and, licking his hand, testified his joy at the meeting.

"See, here is Gros Noir," said Waldemar, somewhat bitterly. "Next to Eugène, he likes me. He makes no question of French or German; he knows where he loves, and is content."

Lucienne's dark eyes filled with tears: she drew closer to her betrothed. "Do you think I also shall not be content?" she said. "But you will let me love France?"

"God forbid I should wish otherwise, little enthusiast; what a terrible tyrant you must take me for," said Steinthal, a bright smile lighting up his handsome face, and chasing away the cloud that had rested upon it during the foregoing conversation.

Monsieur Delapierre, in Paris, and Herr Steinthal, in Leipsic, were old friends, and had been much engaged in business together, both being devoted to the delightful pursuit of money-making; the one following it as ardently in the gay capital of the French Empire as the other in the flourishing German town.

Herr Steinthal had an only son, and Monsieur Delapierre an only daughter, and the two worthy and careful fathers, putting their heads together, concluded that the best and most natural thing in the world would be the union of the two houses by the marriage of Waldemar and Lucienne. When Waldemar had passed through his college course and his year of travel, and Lucienne had left her pensionnat, it was considered time to announce to the young people the happiness that awaited them. Waldemar consequently was despatched to Monsieur Delapierre's château, where the family had assembled for their summer holiday, to make the acquaintance of his bride elect. Contrary to what might have been expected, young Steinthal and Mademoiselle Delapierre became devotedly attached to each other; the only cloud that ever appeared on their horizon arising from the difference in their political feelings. Waldemar, though this was unknown even to his father, had enrolled himself a member of one of the secret societies then so widely spread over Germany, while Eugène Delapierre, a lieutenant in an Imperial regiment, had inoculated his sister with that enthusiastic admiration the soldiers entertained for Napoleon, as well as with a fervent love for France. The young, however, seldom absorbed themselves in politics; and, notwithstanding this difference, the days passed happily away, and hour by hour their hearts were drawn more closely together.

The marriage was not to take place till the following year, as Lucienne was only seventeen, and it seemed advisable that Waldemar should be inducted in his father's lucrative business before taking upon himself the duties of a Benedict. Waldemar's leave of absence extended to the time when cold winds and falling leaves would warn the Delapierre

family to return to their comfortable residence in Paris. A sunny month still remained to intensify the love between the betrothed, and the warm friendship that existed between the future brothers-in-law.

But the happiest time must come to an end. The first tears of real grief that Lucienne had ever shed fell from her eyes as she watched the carriage that conveyed her lover away.

"In one year," he had whispered, as he folded her in a parting embrace; and she, blushing like a rose, had avowed that she too would count the months till they met again.

## II.

ONE little year! Who can say what events it may bring forth? Who can calculate what changes may come with the changing seasons? In 1812 France and Prussia were allies; but as early as March, 1813, war had been declared between them. Various successes and defeats attended the conflicting armies, till the battle of Leipsic turned the tide of victory in favour of the Germans. How could the German youth refuse to draw the sword for their country's freedom? Who refuse to enrol himself under her banner at her call? Not Waldemar Steinthal. Carried away by the ardent hope for the liberation of Germany, he had rushed to take part in the struggle, perhaps scarcely prepared at the moment for the personal loss that must ensue.

The sun was setting, lurid through the smoke that hung over the battle-field of Leipsic, on the evening of the 17th of October. The roar of the guns had ceased. The silence was dreadful after the deafening clamour of the fight, for it was the silence of death. Thousands of brave men, who in the morning had advanced to the combat full of ardour and hope, lay stretched cold and lifeless on the plain. That day victory had declared for Germany, and with victory the yoke that had pressed on the beloved fatherland was broken for ever. The French Empire had cast itself against the strong German heart, and been broken like a hollow earthen vessel against a rock. So had the Roman armies been driven back by Arminius. So had the burning eloquence of Luther destroyed the supremacy of the Pope; so shall a people conquer who, to use the words of Körner, think no sacrifice too great for that first of mortal blessings, their "country's freedom."

In a corner of the battle-field near the Elster, and within sight of the town of Leipsic, a group of young men had bivouacked. By the black tunic with red facings, and the oilskin cap, might be recognised the remnant of Lützow's brave band of volunteers. Several of their number were missing since the morning; two or three of those now gathered round the camp fire were wounded. In spite of the success of their arms they were silent and sad—partly from physical exhaus-

tion after the three days' struggle, partly from the blank left in their ranks, speaking to them of loss amidst the general gain.

"Cheer up, comrades!" exclaimed a junker, whom frequent duels and bürschen exploits had rendered familiar with danger, and on whose reckless temperament the horrors by which he was surrounded made little impression. "Here is wine, Bacchus be thanked! Drink, comrades, and quench the smell of powder in glorious nectar!"

"Give some here quick, Heinrich," said Waldemar Steinthal. "Max is faint from his wound."

"Not a drop, till you are ready to pledge me in a cup to Blucher, the old hacksword!" Heinrich replied.

"Give it here," said Waldemar, once more. "We will drink to Blucher with all our hearts. That's a good fellow! Now, Max, drink."

As he spoke, he held a flask to the lips of a youth lying on his cloak beside him. After Max had tasted the wine, he strove to raise himself on his elbow.

"It is nothing," he said, sinking down again. "Only a cut about the head. Lieschen will think none the worse of me for a scar." And a smile stole over his pallid face.

"Another cup," cried Heinrich. "To the memory of Queen Louise, the good angel!"

Again the cups clinked. Several rose to their feet, while they reverently mentioned the name of the woman so much beloved.

"One also to the memory of our comrade, Karl Theodor," exclaimed another of the volunteers.

"To Körner!" shouted the band. Heinrich Bergholt struck up the well-known strain, "Das Schwert," and soon the wild chorus, "Hurrah, hurrah!" rang through the battle-field.

A handsome, blue-eyed youth, scarcely more than a boy, at this moment joined the circle, and throwing down an empty pail, sank on the ground, covering his face with his hands.

"Be silent, Heinrich," he cried, after a few minutes, lifting his head and dashing the tears from his eyes. "Is this a time for singing? But you would sing in Gehenna, I believe, some of you."

"What is the matter, Ludwig? Where is the water?" asked Heinrich, ceasing his song.

"Gone!" returned Ludwig. "I had to go far up the river, all about here, and all the ponds, are bloodstained. If you had but seen the sights I have! The poor dying wretches screaming for water. How do I know whether they were French or Germans? They were human beings, I suppose. What could I do but give them what I had?"

"Here comes Wolstang with his pail full, fortunately for us, thou soft-hearted boy," said Heinrich. "Who would have thought thou wouldst have used thy bayonet as thou didst to-day? Have some wine, and a truce to thy tears. Was der Henker!"

As Bergholt made this exclamation, he started back with an expression of alarm that caused a laugh, as a large black retriever cleared the circle with a leap, and dashed on to where Waldemar was half sitting, half reclining. The dog darted upon him with a cry almost human in its expression of joy, licking his hands and face. Then, changing his tone to a whine, he pulled at his coat, and showed by his action that he desired Steinthal to follow him.

"Good heavens, it is Gros Noir!" Waldemar exclaimed. "Eugène must be here. Heinrich, Julius, Fritz, come with me." He started up, taking the cloak on which he had been lying over his arm. "Not you, Ludwig, you have had enough, my lad. Bring a torch with you; it has become as dark as the jaws of death."

The dog, finding that his appeal had been understood, ran on before, bounding over the incumbrances by the way. The men followed more slowly over the ground.

At last the dog stopped, and raising his head uttered a howl that made the listeners' blood run cold.

Steinthal seized the torch from his comrade's hand, and stooped down over a heap of slain. There, as he had foreboded, lay the brother of his once-promised bride—Eugène Delapierre. A few drops of wine from the flask they had brought with them were poured between the rigid lips, and then carefully the four youths raised the dying man. They placed him in Waldemar's cloak, and, each taking a corner, they gently bore him in this improvised litter to their camp fire, Gros Noir following close behind.

With aching heart, Steinthal endeavoured to restore his friend to consciousness; his tears falling fast the while over the well-known face, on which the seal of death was already set. But it seemed to be Gros Noir licking his master's cold face that at last recalled for a moment the fast ebbing tide of life. Eugène opened his eyes, and on seeing Waldemar smiled faintly.

"Brother," he murmured, endeavouring to hold out his hand.

Waldemar clasped it, his strong breast heaving with the emotions and recollections that word had called forth. Eugène made a sign for Waldemar to raise him. With feeble hand he pointed to his breast.

"Take it," he gasped. "Her portrait—letters—she loved you, though she broke off with you. She will know I died—for France!"

These words were the last effort of expiring nature. A few struggling sighs, and Eugène Delapierre lay dead in Waldemar's arms.

Waldemar covered the form of his friend with the cloak on which he had been laid, and leaving Gros Noir stretched beside the body, retired to a little distance, where, his face buried in his hands, he gave himself up to grief. Not long, however, was he left to the indulgence of his sorrow. Suddenly the bugles sounded to horse,—the French were retreating under cover of the night. The events of that memorable

retreat are matters of history. On the night of the 19th Waldemar Steinthal slept in his father's house.

Herr Steinthal, on the first rumour of the German outbreak, had conveyed himself and his money bags to a place of safety, and the house had been occupied by the sick and wounded ever since the battle of Lutzen. Waldemar, however, found a small room where he could be alone. He had just been assisting to lay in the grave his two dearest friends, Eugène Delapierre and the tender-hearted young Ludwig Krone, killed in the *mêlée* when the explosion took place at the Lindenau bridge.

Now, at last, Waldemar had time to give to sorrow. He opened the packet taken from the breast pocket of Eugène's coat. The first thing that met his eyes was a beautifully executed miniature of Lucienne. There were the rosy lips he had kissed; there the dark eyes that had looked lovingly into his; there the abundant and glossy hair, a lock of which still rested next his heart. He raised the portrait to his lips. Alas! never more would he meet the light of those speaking eyes; never more bask in the sunny smile of which the picture gave a faint reflex. With a bursting sigh, he laid the miniature by his side, and took up the two or three letters that accompanied it. The sight of the well-known handwriting affected him almost as deeply as the pictured face. The letters were addressed to her brother; one seemed to be in answer to some question or expostulation.

"You ask me if I no longer love Waldemar Steinthal. As well ask me if I no longer breathe." So it ran. "You men make sacrifices for your emperor and your country; we women have also sacrifices to make. You give your swords, we give our hearts; and mine lies torn and bleeding, broken by this bitter strife between all I hold dear. Sleeping or waking, I have ever one image before me—Waldemar armed against France; perhaps against thee. My prayers are distracted. How can I implore divine aid for one, while I weep to think of the other's fall? Do not think I blame Waldemar; he could not have done otherwise. It is no wrong, but cruel fate, that has come between us. Speak to me no more of marriage; henceforward I dedicate myself to my God, to the unfortunate, and to thee, my brother."

Waldemar read no more. The letters did but confirm what he knew before.

"Oh my country," he cried aloud; "thou hast cost me much!"

### III.

FIFTY-SEVEN years passed away. Nature, ever young, ever renovating the old, and restoring the lost, was fresh and fair as formerly around the château of the Delapierres, now owned by an aged lady, the last of her race. Deeply affected she had been by the successes of the Ger-

mans, and the march of an invading army through the province, but she had opened her doors to the wounded indiscriminately, whether French or German.

One evening, after a skirmish in the neighbourhood, several wounded soldiers were brought to her well-known habitation. She came into the hall to receive them, and to give orders as to their disposal. Pale and sad she looked in her semi-religious dress of black serge, her silver grey hair put away under a close white cap, as she stood there, speaking words of comfort and encouragement to the poor fellows who had claimed her hospitality. And thus, in works of mercy, she found alleviation of the life-long sorrow that was consuming her.

Seven or eight had been thus received; another had yet to come they told her. She waited. He was borne in on a litter, for he had been wounded in the knee. A handsome youth, with deep blue eyes, and fair hair and moustache. When Mademoiselle Delapierre caught sight of his face, she uttered a cry and tottered forward, but restraining herself with an effort, she ordered that he should be conveyed to her own chamber. "I myself will take charge of him," she said to the servant who awaited her orders.

The woman, who had grown old in the Delapierres' service, would have expostulated, knowing her mistress's feeble state; but Mademoiselle Delapierre, with a movement of her hand, signified her determination. The young man was laid in bed and his wound dressed. It proved not to be serious; a simple fracture, that would scarcely produce permanent lameness. When Mademoiselle Delapierre entered the room to take up her night watch, he was able to thank her for her kind care. His hostess scarcely appeared to hear what he said; her gaze was fixed on his countenance.

"You are German," she said.

"I am, madame; I come from Leipsic," was the answer.

"And your name?"

"Waldemar Steinthal."

"I knew it!" Mademoiselle Delapierre exclaimed, clasping her hands.

The youth regarded her with surprise.

"Your father—it must be—was once—that is, I once knew him," said Mademoiselle Delapierre, in broken accents. "Waldemar Steinthal, of Leipsic, you say?"

"The same, madame."

"You are young to be his son?"

"He did not marry till late in life, madame," the youth replied.

"He suffered from some early disappointment, I have heard."

The old lady trembled more and more; she sat down by the side of the bed. "Tell me more," she said. "Have you brothers and sisters?"

"One brother, and one sister, madame—Eugène and Lucienne French names, you see. But my father had tender recollections of France, he used to say."

Mademoiselle Delapierre pressed her hand to her side. Her heart beat painfully. "And your mother?" she asked.

"Is an angel of goodness, madame," the young man returned. "She loved my father. She knew all, and was contented with his friendship. They were happy."

"Were? You speak in the past tense, my child."

"Alas, yes!" answered the youth. "My father has been dead some years. But my mother still lives; lives to bless you, madame, for your kindness to her son."

There was silence for a few minutes; a flood of tender remembrances overpowered her. Then the old lady rose, and opening a cabinet, took from a casket a locket set with brilliants. She touched the spring. Inside was a knot of brown and black hair intertwined, with the initials and date, W. S. L. D., 1812. She stood for a moment as if lost in meditation, then closing the locket, she returned to the side of the bed, and placed it, together with the gold chain to which it was attached, in the youth's hand.

"When you return to Leipsic, give this to your sister," she said, faltering with emotion. "Tell her it is from Lucienne Delapierre."

"Madame? You —"

"Hush!" Mademoiselle Delapierre interposed. "You have talked enough. You must sleep now. I also am weary. Good-night."

She stooped and pressed a kiss on the young man's brow. He felt a tear fall, and her lips were cold. She sank back in the chair-lounge that had been placed beside the bed, and soon the silence of night was only broken by the regular breathing of the wounded man.

Early in the morning, the old servant came in to relieve her beloved mistress from her watch. But the words she was about to utter were frozen on her lips. Both the inmates of the room were sleeping; the young soldier calmly and soundly, soon to awake to renewed life. Mademoiselle Delapierre slept still more calmly and soundly, a placid smile on her face, pallid as snow. Her waking would be in another world, whither her spirit had flown to rejoin his, the betrothed of her youth, loved so fondly in spite of all adverse influences.

God had joined these two hearts together, but man, with his ambition, his cruel enmity, had put them asunder. In Heaven there is peace.





J. SWAIN.

EDINA'S ARRIVAL.

M. ELLEN EDWARDS.